

## Hizbollah attacks Israeli positions in Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas fired around 40 mortar rounds at two Israeli positions in south Lebanon Sunday, but there were no reports of casualties, security sources said. The mortars targeted the positions of Qantara and Mashaarun, on the edge of the self-declared "security zone" occupied by Israel in south Lebanon since 1985, the sources said. The Islamic resistance, the armed wing of the Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim Hizbollah militia, issued a statement saying the mortar attacks had obtained their objectives. Police said Israeli artillery responded to the attacks by pounding suspected Hizbollah positions in the valleys opposite the buffer strip, but they were unable to give details of casualties. An Israeli soldier was seriously injured Saturday in a Hizbollah attack on the occupied zone, leading to retaliatory shelling by the Jewish State.

# Jordan Times

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جوردان تيمز يومية مستقلة بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية والرأي

## Ouyahia renamed as Algerian prime minister

ALGIERS (AP) — Outgoing Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia Saturday was named to head Algeria's new government by President Liamine Zeroual. Mr. Ouyahia, whose National Democratic Rally had won 155 seats in the new 380-seat parliament elected last week, had formally stepped down as prime minister Tuesday so the new government could be formed. His reappointment as premier, though, had been expected. Mr. Ouyahia had served as prime minister since January 1996. Last week's voting marked the first multi-party parliamentary elections since the beginning of a bloody five-year insurgency by Muslim militants that has left more than 60,000 people dead.

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## Palestinians, Israelis clash as negotiators stay silent; 15 youths, 2 soldiers injured

HEBRON (Agencies) — Fifteen Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers were wounded on Sunday in clashes between troops and stone-throwing Arab demonstrators in the West Bank town of Hebron, witnesses and hospital officials said.

Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli soldiers for the second day running as tensions continued to mount due to the stalemate in the peace process.

About 150 protesters, some shouting anti-U.S. slogans, hurled stones and firebombs at Israeli troops guarding Jewish settler enclaves in the city centre and the soldiers responded by firing volleys of rubber bullets, witnesses said.

Saturday, more than 40 Palestinians were injured, six seriously, by rubber bullets in several hours of clashes on the edge of the Israeli-controlled zone in this divided West Bank city.

More than 300 Palestinians were involved in Saturday's fighting, the worst violence in the city since three Palestinians were killed in a week of clashes which erupted in protest at the start of construction by Israel in March of a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

Some protesters linked their anger to a vote last week in the U.S. Congress recognising Israel's sovereignty over a "united Jerusalem." But observers said the unrest was more broadly motivated by rising Palestinian anger over Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu's policy of expanding Jewish settlements in occupied Arab areas.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) called Friday for stepped up protests against Israeli settlement expansion, warning: "The Palestinian masses cannot be patient any more."

The Palestinians "will confront the expansion of settlements in Gaza, the West Bank and in east Jerusalem and at Jabal Abu Ghneim," the leadership said in a statement. Palestinian police have done little to curb the stone-throwing in Hebron, fuelling charges by Israel that President Yasser Arafat's self-rule government is encouraging the violence to put pressure on Mr. Netanyahu.

Palestinian officials said Mr. Arafat met with his top negotiators late Saturday in the West Bank town of Nablus and decided to send them for a new round of talks with Egyptian mediators.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat was scheduled to lead the team to Cairo later Sunday, the officials said.

Mr. Arafat was meanwhile due to meet later Sunday in the West Bank with former Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Mr. Peres, who was recently replaced as head of Israel's opposition Labour Party, was the principal architect of the Oslo peace accord which brought limited self-rule to Palestinians in most of the Gaza Strip



**GUILTY OF PROTEST:** A Palestinian child is arrested by Israeli soldiers during clashes in Hebron, Sunday. Several Palestinians were injured for the second day running of protests against the stalemate in the peace process, and more recently, against the U.S. Congress vote recognising Israeli sovereignty over east Jerusalem (AFP Photo)

### Palestinian negotiators to head for Cairo

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) top negotiators will travel to Cairo Sunday for talks with Egyptian officials on the stalled peace process with Israel, officials said. Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat, his deputy Hassan Asfur and spokesman Marwan Kanafani are scheduled to meet with senior officials in Cairo Monday to discuss Egypt's so far fruitless effort to mediate a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian talks, the officials said. After U.S. attempts to overcome the deadlock failed, Egypt took over the mediation effort at the start of June. Osama Al Baz, a senior advisor to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, has met several times with leaders from both sides and succeeded a week ago in getting Israeli and Palestinian negotiators into a face-to-face meeting. But the talks have failed to provide any breakthrough. As the stalemate dragged on, violent protests erupted in the Palestinian areas, with youths clashing with Israeli soldiers in Hebron Sunday for the second day in a row.

and the main population centres of the West Bank. Since coming to office a year ago, Mr. Netanyahu

has slowed the process of expanding self-rule laid down in the Oslo accords, claiming the Palestinians

have violated their side of the bargain by failing to crack down on armed anti-Israeli militants.

## PNA arrests militants in search for Israel's most wanted man

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has arrested nine Islamist activists as part of a renewed hunt for a top militant long considered Israel's most wanted man, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said Sunday.

Hamas officials said the nine were rounded up late last week in the southern Gaza town of Khan Yunis and were questioned about the activities and possible whereabouts of Mohammad Deif, head of the armed wing of the Islamist movement.

Three of those arrested were later released, Hamas officials told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The Palestinian Authority military intelligence agents came late Thursday and searched several houses in Khan Yunis, arresting nine Hamas activists or

supporters," one official said. "Interrogations of those detained concerned Mohammad Deif, who is wanted by Palestinian security and by Israel," the official said.

Israel has repeatedly demanded the arrest and extradition of Mr. Deif since Hamas carried out a string of suicide bombings in early 1996 which killed 45 people in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The Israelis believe Mr. Deif masterminded the bombings and other anti-Israeli attacks by Hamas, the main militant group opposed to peace agreements between Israel and the PNA.

The reported hunt for Mr. Deif by Palestinian police came as Israel reiterated complaints that Mr. Arafat was not doing enough to crack down on armed mili-

itants. The PNA has formally suspended security cooperation with Israel as part of a three-month-old protest over the continued expansion of Jewish settlements in occupied Arab areas.

Colonel Mohammed Dahlan, head of the Palestinian security service in the Gaza strip, reiterated Friday that there would be no return to security coordination "as long as this Israeli government does not back off its settlement policy, stop building and remove what it began building."

Hamas officials said in a statement issued Sunday that the Palestinian police hunt for Mr. Deif "shows that security cooperation is continuing between Israel and the Palestinian Authority" despite the official denials.

## Ciller warns against trying military coup

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, due to take over from coalition partner Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan next week ahead of early elections, implicitly warned the army Saturday against trying a coup.

"We will not abandon Turkey to a power that is above the will of the people," Ms. Ciller said at a press conference. "I will fight to the end."

Ms. Ciller said it was inconceivable that the international community should accept a Turkey where democracy did not exist, adding that in that case Turkish membership of the European Union could be ruled out.

Mr. Erbakan's government is under strong mili-

tary pressure because of the pro-Islamic stance of the prime minister's Refah (Welfare) Party, the senior partner in the coalition with Ms. Ciller's rightwing True Path.

In a bid to frustrate the army, Mr. Erbakan and Ms. Ciller have agreed to swap jobs next week and call early elections.

Ms. Ciller had also threatened to withdraw her party from government if Mr. Erbakan refused to step aside.

Mr. Erbakan's government lost its parliamentary majority two weeks ago when deputies from Ms. Ciller's party defected, unhappy with the partnership, leaving the balance of power with the far-right Grand Union Party.

## Iraq assails U.N. envoy over inspection rights

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz accused chief United Nations arms inspector Rolf Ekeus of trying to create "crisis" between his country and the world body, Iraqi newspapers said Sunday.

"Sending a (U.N.) inspection team at this time when we are concentrating our efforts to close down (Iraq's weapons) files, means nothing but a deliberate waste of time and a creation of crisis," the papers quoted Mr. Aziz as saying in a letter to Mr. Ekeus.

Mr. Ekeus, who heads the U.N. special commission in charge of destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, has recently complained twice to the Security Council about Iraqi interference with U.N. helicopter flights during the inspection of several Iraqi facilities at the beginning of this month and Thursday and Wednesday.

"The incident which he (Mr. Ekeus) referred to... is a simple one among hundreds of flights which took place over the last months and which are continuing on daily

and normal basis," Mr. Aziz said.

The council deplored Friday what it called unacceptable interference by Iraq with the flight of U.N. helicopters and told Baghdad to take immediate steps to halt such actions.

The council is likely to adopt a formal resolution when it is expected next week to deal with Mr. Ekeus' second complaint that Iraq had barred U.N. teams from two suspected military sites Thursday and a third location Wednesday.

## Iranian official says problem with Jordan is its ties with Israel

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Maliki Saturday said that his country wants to build a "special" relationship with Jordan but he emphasised that the Kingdom's relationship with Israel hinders any development in relations between the two countries.

"There is an inclination in Iran to have good relations with Jordan but let me speak frankly: The Iranian people want Jordan to keep

away from the Zionist regime," said Mr. Maliki who was addressing political activists and intellectuals at the Department of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

Mr. Maliki, the senior-most official in Iran's foreign ministry to visit Jordan in the past three years, said that Iran's position towards Israel will never change adding that "Iran does not recognise the existence of Israel and considers it as an expansionist entity."

(Continued on page 7)

## Middle East denounces U.S. Congress vote on Jerusalem

Combined agencies dispatches

SUDAN SUNDAY added its voice to the wave of Islamic and Arab anger over the decision by the U.S. House of Representatives to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's united capital.

Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail issued a statement describing last week's vote as "an open U.S. alignment with Israel against the Palestinian cause."

Mr. Ismail said the resolution had been passed under "Zionist pressure," and called on Arab states to "assume a unified position to dissuade the U.S. administration from implementing this resolution."

In another condemnation of the U.S. vote, Kuwait's parliament has urged President Bill Clinton to intervene and warned of more strife.

The 50-seat house issued a statement late Saturday saying that the vote by the U.S. House of Representatives Tuesday would throw the region into "violence

and put it on the verge of... an explosion," Kuwait's official news agency reported.

It called the vote a "declaration of war against the Palestinian people who will never accept peace without Jerusalem."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein urged Arab states Sunday to set aside their differences and unite in the wake of the vote.

"Iraq is ready, in keeping with its responsibilities toward the Arab World, to join its brothers in examining Arab national unity, setting aside the past," he told a cabinet meeting, quoted by the official news agency INA.

The government condemned Tuesday's vote as "a flagrant U.S. challenge" to the Arab World.

Lebanon on Sunday said the U.S. congressional vote has dealt a blow to the Middle East peace process and called into question the U.S. role in negotiations.

"The decision by the American deputies goes beyond the foundations of the peace process which provides for a debate on the definitive status of

Jerusalem in the final phase," Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz said at a press conference.

Tuesday's resolution by the U.S. House of Representatives "torpedoes the U.S. role as mediator and honest broker in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations," and weakens international confidence in the United States, Mr. Bweiz said.

Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said the U.S. Congress' call to move the American embassy to Jerusalem disqualified Washington as a mediator of the Palestinian issue.

The call was a "further irrefutable indication of unjustifiable American bias," Mr. Rafsanjani said, addressing representatives from eight Muslim nations during a summit in Istanbul.

"This decision illustrates once again that U.S. policy is completely dedicated to serving the illegitimate interests of Israel... and automatically disqualifies the United States from mediating the Palestinian crisis," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

## Crown Prince to discuss Congress resolution on Jerusalem — Anani

### Prince Hassan to stress Iraq's sovereignty

WASHINGTON (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who starts a visit to Washington today will convey to the U.S. administration Jordan's stand as expressed by His Majesty King Hussein concerning a U.S. House of Representatives announcement considering Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel.

Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Jawad Al Anani said here Sunday.

Dr. Anani, who along with other Jordanian officials accompanying the Crown Prince on the visit, said that "Prince Hassan will reassert that east Jerusalem is an Arab land occupied since 1967 and its occupation is null and void in accordance with international laws and U.N. resolutions."

"As such the U.S. House of Representatives' announcement poses a threat to the peace process at a time when Arab and international

efforts are under way to give impetus to this process," added Dr. Anani.

In his talks in Washington, Prince Hassan is expected to discuss the peace process and obstacles in its path and will urge the U.S. administration to exert additional efforts to halt Israeli settlement plans and Israel's drive to Judaize the Holy City, and to ensure that Israel abides by the peace accords it had signed with the Palestine National Authority, according to Dr. Anani.

He said that Jordanian-U.S. ties and U.S. economic and financial aid to Jordan will also figure in the talks.

In addition, Prince Hassan is expected to present Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the recent developments in northern Iraq and to reiterate Jordan's opposition to any change in the region's map, stressing that Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be safeguarded, Dr. Anani said.

Noting that Prince Hassan's visit to the U.S. was within the framework of continued dialogue with the American administration, he said that the dialogue is important in view of the major role Washington plays in world affairs as a superpower.

Referring to the outcome of Prince Hassan's visit to Turkey, Dr. Anani said that the visit was successful by all standards.

"The visit was timely because it was necessary for Prince Hassan to convey to the Turkish leaders the Arab views and their opposition to any change in the map of the region," Dr. Anani who said and added that the Turkish leaders have reassured Prince Hassan that they are keen on safeguarding Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Apart from Dr. Anani, Prince Hassan is accompanied by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Minister of Industry and Trade and Supply Hani Mulki and other officials.

## Arab League hails United Nations vote on Israel Qana compensation

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League on Sunday hailed a U.N. General Assembly order to Israel to pay \$1.7 million in damages for an attack on a U.N. compound in south Lebanon.

More than 100 Lebanese civilians who had sought refuge in the compound at Qana were killed in the April 1996 shelling, which according to a U.N. report was deliberate.

The attack came during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" operation against Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

tion of Israel from the international community more than mere compensation because the lives of Qana's innocent (victims) has no price," said Ahmad Ben Helli, the Arab League official for Lebanese affairs.

"The General Assembly resolution constitutes as well a good sign because it condemns the state terrorism practised by Israel," Mr. Ben Helli told reporters here.

The General Assembly vote Friday confirmed an unprecedented motion in the assembly's fifth committee, responsible for finances, which folded the

decision concerning Israel into a resolution on the financing of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

In the General Assembly, 127 states voted in favour of the resolution while Israel and the United States voted against. Russia abstained on the ground that political considerations were not appropriate in a financing resolution.

Israel's U.N. delegate immediately said his country would not pay.

U.N. General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, but carry moral and political weight.

## Palestinian National Authority links municipal polls to Israeli withdrawal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) will delay the first municipal elections under Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) rule until Israel completes troop withdrawals from West Bank rural areas, a PLO official said Sunday.

"We are linking the municipal elections to redeployment of Israeli troops from the rest of the West Bank. Since Israel did not complete withdrawal yet, we have decided to postpone the local elections," said PNA Minister of Local Government Saeb Erekat.

The elections were set for this August after an earlier

delay from October 1996, a month after Israel was due to have begun evacuating from West Bank rural areas under a 1995 peace deal with the PLO.

Mr. Erekat told Reuters that 90 per cent of Palestinian municipalities were in areas still under Israeli security control. Most of the areas fall under Palestinian civil jurisdiction.

"Unfortunately since Israel has frozen its withdrawal, we can't take the risk of holding elections under occupation and our local elections are the first in Palestinian history under Palestinian rule," Mr. Erekat said.

Israel has handed over to the PNA most of the Gaza Strip, seven West Bank cities under 1993 and 1995 peace deals.

It also redeployed in April from nine per cent of the West Bank in a move which angered Palestinians, who were expecting to receive three times that amount in the first of three Israeli pull-backs from rural areas slated to end in mid-1998.

Mr. Erekat said 374 municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had already started preparations for the elections.

PLO-Israeli peace moves have been suspended since March when Israel broke

ground on a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Erekat said Saturday he had appointed Hanna Nasser mayor of Bethlehem after the resignation of Elias Freij last month.

"I have also appointed a 24-member committee, headed by Hanna Nasser to serve Bethlehem municipality until municipal elections are held," he said.

Mr. Nasser was Freij's deputy. Mr. Freij, mayor since 1972 and tourism minister in the PNA, resigned from public life after 51 years of service for health reasons.



Members of a Syrian trade delegation welcome their Iraqi counterparts at the Syrian-Iraqi border point of Al Tanaf east of Damascus on Saturday. The Iraqi delegation arrived in Syria for the first such visit since their mutual border was closed in 1982 (AFP photo)

## Syria opens three border crossing points with Iraq 17 years after closure

DAMASCUS (AP) — In a sign of thawing relations, Syria announced Saturday that it has opened three border crossing points with Iraq, ending 17 years of closed frontiers between the countries.

Iraq only has open borders with neighbouring Jordan and Turkey and the move could help ease Baghdad's isolation.

Rateb Shallah, chairman of Syria's Chamber of Commerce, told Syrian and

Iraqi businessmen Saturday that three border points are open and passengers and cargo may cross from either side of the border. He did not specify when the border points were opened.

Earlier Saturday, an Iraqi business delegation held talks with Syrian officials and businessmen on ways to transport imported European goods into Iraq.

Mr. Shallah said that as a sign of goodwill Syria will organise a trade fair in

Baghdad in July. He also said Iraq will take part in this year's Damascus international trade fair.

Baghdad has boycotted the trade fair since it severed diplomatic relations and closed its borders with Syria in 1980 after Damascus backed Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Syria and Iraq signed agreements last week under which Syria is to export food, soap and detergent to Iraq.

The United Nations imposed sweeping trade sanctions against Iraq following Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq, however, is allowed to sell limited amounts of oil to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian goods under an oil-for-food agreement that is an exemption from the embargo.

Iraq and Syria are led by rival wings of the pan-Arab Baath Party and relations have long been strained.

## Iranian security forces arrest 17 gangsters, murderers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian security forces have arrested 17 members of an infamous gang accused of murder, extortion and pimping in the holy city of Mashhad, newspapers reported Sunday.

The alleged leader of the gang, Qadir Ghorbat, and seven of his sons were among those rounded up by the intelligence services in the northeastern city, they said without giving the date of the arrest.

The dreaded gang, known as Ghorbat, has been engaged in criminal activities in seedy neighbourhoods of Mashhad near the holiest shrine in Iran, the mausoleum of the eighth Shiite Muslim Imam Reza.

The suspects are accused of "sexual advances and enslaving women and youth and using them for prostitution..."

They are also charged with drug trafficking, theft and attacks on pilgrims as part of their "campaign of extortion and bullying," they said.

Security forces regularly conduct raids on the gang, but they have managed to survive as their victims are often too afraid to testify. Last year they kidnapped a young boy in front of a mosque as bystanders helplessly watched.

The newspapers reported that residents in downtown Mashhad were "fed-up" with Ghorbat transgressions and the latest arrests were welcomed.

## Kuwait to normalise ties with 'pro-Iraqi' Arab countries — FM

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said Saturday that Kuwait plans to normalise ties soon with some Arab countries deemed to have supported Iraq during the 1991 Gulf war.

"I have said many times that normalisation with certain Arab countries which adopted a pro-Iraqi stance will take place in the near future," Sheikh Sabah told reporters after parliament met to discuss foreign policy.

However, the Kuwaiti diplomat declined to give any dates and say which countries were concerned.

Following the liberation of Kuwait from seven months of Iraqi occupation in February 1991, the emirate accused Jordan, Yemen, Sudan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) of giving support to Baghdad.

Sheikh Sabah also played down the ongoing rapprochement between Syria and Iraq, saying it concerned "purely economic issues and not political issues."

"I have been assured by my brothers in Syria on this subject," he added.

Syria this week opened its border with Iraq for trade as an Iraqi economic

delegation arrived in Syria for the first such visit since the border was closed in 1982.

Iraq, which has been under a U.N. embargo since the invasion of Kuwait, signed its first contracts with Syria last week in line with a humanitarian deal with the United Nations and called for normalising ties with its neighbour.

However, Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam said Saturday that ties between the two countries were only at the economic level.

## Centrists who helped elect Khatami plan to form political party

DUBAI (R) — An influential group of Iranian centrists and technocrats who helped elect moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami as Iran's next president said they would soon form a political party.

The Servants of Construction, also known as the Group of Six (G-6), said they hoped there would be no legal impediment to interior ministry approval, Iranian newspapers said Sunday.

"A formal announcement of the political party will be made after two months," Iran News daily quoted a source close to the centrists as saying.

The reason was that they expected it would be easier to form a political party after Mr. Khatami's inauguration in August as President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's successor, newspapers said.

The group, formed ahead of March 1996 parliamentary elections, includes Vice-President Mohammad Hashemi, Central Bank Governor Mohsen Nourbakhsh and Tehran Mayor Gholamhusein Karbaschi.

Iranian newspapers said four more prominent politicians had joined, including Faezeh Hashemi, Mr. Rafsanjani's daughter who was elected to parliament for the first time last year.

Political parties were banned in Iran after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Groups or factions, such as G-6, form to support individual politicians.

Others include the Association of Militant Clergy, a group of conservative Shiite Muslim clerics including Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri, who was heavily defeated in the May 23 presidential election.

## Egypt, Libya to go ahead with oil pipeline and refinery

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt and Libya will "build" an oil pipeline to carry Libyan oil to the northern Egyptian city of Alexandria where a new oil refinery will be constructed, Egyptian Oil Minister Hamdi Banbi said Sunday.

Mr. Banbi told the government daily Al Ahran that he would meet with Libyan Oil Minister Abdullah Salem Al

Badri in Cairo in July to discuss the project.

"The project involves setting up a pipeline 622 kilometres long, of which 127 kilometres will be in Libyan territory and 495 kilometres in Egypt," he said.

Mr. Banbi said the pipeline would begin in the eastern Libyan city of Tobruk, and lead to the new refinery in

Alexandria which will have a capacity of 150,000 barrels of oil per day.

He said the project would be handled by the Egyptian firm Petrojet and several specialised Libyan companies.

Egyptian Industry Minister Suleiman Reda told Al Ahran that following President Hosni Mubarak's two-day visit to Libya last week,

the two countries are considering eight joint industrial projects worth \$650 million.

He said the projects concerned were four steel factories, two fertiliser plants, a sugar-beet factory and filletting factory.

Reda said the Libyan authorities had also proposed two joint mining projects in Egypt's western desert, and

that the relevant ministers from both countries would meet in a month's time to discuss all the projects.

During Mr. Mubarak's visit, Egyptian officials signed a preliminary accord for an Arab free trade zone and an accord aimed at raising bilateral trade from its current level of \$157.2 million per year.

## Cohen visits U.S. forces at Prince Sultan airbase in S. Arabia

JEDDAH (R) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen flew to remote Prince Sultan airbase in the Saudi Arabian desert early Sunday to visit U.S. air force personnel monitoring southern Iraq.

Mr. Cohen is on the first leg of a trip to the Gulf. On Saturday night he held talks with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and later Sunday he was due to meet Crown Prince Abdullah before flying to Kuwait for meetings with leaders of that Gulf emirate.

His trip will also take him to Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman before he returns home Wednesday.

Washington still maintains a major naval force in the Gulf based in Bahrain and has nearly 200 attack jets in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, keeping watch over southern Iraq.

Mr. Cohen's itinerary included a visit Sunday to some of the more than 4,000 U.S. airmen at Prince Sultan Airbase in the Saudi desert.

Mr. Cohen told reporters on arrival in Saudi Arabia from Brussels Saturday that Washington was "hopeful but sceptical" that Iraq would give up its support of international terrorism following a recent election.

But he also vowed in an interview aboard his aircraft en route to Jeddah that the United States would not soften its hardline policy toward Iraq unless there were signs it had changed its attitude toward the West and its opposition to the Middle East peace process.

The recent election of moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami as Iran's president has raised hopes that Tehran would soften its own tough policy toward the West.

"We remain hopeful but sceptical" on Iran, Mr. Cohen told reporters. "For the time being our policy is going to remain constant."

Mr. Cohen met for 30 minutes with King Fahd Saturday night and the two men afterwards confirmed the "firm and unshakable" relationship between the two countries.

U.S. Defence Department spokesman Ken Bacon told reporters.

Bacon said that the king, who has been reported in ill-health in recent years, was "lively and responsive" during

the meeting at his palace and that Mr. Cohen had emphasised continued U.S. support for Saudi security.

"He (the king) shook hands with everybody. He was engaged and they exchanged jokes," said Mr. Bacon, adding that King Fahd had enquired about President Bill Clinton's knee, which the U.S. leader injured in a fall earlier this year. Referring to last month's election of Mr. Khatami, who is seen as more moderate than his predecessor Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mr. Cohen told reporters in an interview: "We need to see some signs on the part of the Iranians that this (election) will mark a change in their behaviour."

"As long as they continue to support terrorism, as long as

they continue to develop weapons of mass destruction. As long as they try to upset the Middle East peace process, then our policy toward them is not going to change."

Some moderate Gulf states, including Qatar and Oman, have suggested that Washington should open a dialogue with Iran as a step towards ending U.S. attempts to isolate Tehran financially and diplomatically. Iran denies that it supports terrorism.

It is Mr. Cohen's first visit as defence secretary to the potentially volatile region where the United States sent more than 500,000 troops for the 1991 Gulf war in which a U.S.-led military coalition drove occupying Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

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#### PROGRAMME TWO

15:40 .....Spirou  
16:05 .....Neighbours  
16:30 .....Doc. — In The Wild  
17:00 .....Tilt  
17:30 .....Blue Heelers  
18:10 .....French Programmes  
19:00 .....News in French  
19:30 .....News Headline  
19:35 .....Comedy — Parenthood  
20:00 .....Discover Magazine  
20:30 .....Murder She Wrote  
21:10 .....Highlander  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:35 .....The Wright Verdict  
23:15 .....Homicide  
01:35 Soccer match — Colombia vs Costa Rica

#### PRAYER TIMES

03:50 .....Fajr  
05:25 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
12:36 .....Dhuhr  
16:17 .....Asr  
19:47 .....Maghreb  
21:22 .....Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
632785.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623666  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.  
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German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457  
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Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295  
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Another rise in temperatures will take place and temperatures will be above their annual average at this time of the year. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.  
Amman .....16/30  
Aqaba .....22/37  
Deserts .....14/33  
Jordan Valley .....20/36  
Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 28, Aqaba 36 Humidity  
readings: Amman 33 per cent.  
Aqaba 29 per cent.

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY  
AMMAN:  
Dr. Issam Al Asmar .....890504  
Dr. Osama Al Hussein 847289  
Dr. Khalid Klob .....816715  
Dr. Nidal As'ad .....751672  
Firas pharmacy .....661912  
Ferdows pharmacy .....778336  
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Al Salam pharmacy .....636730  
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Najib pharmacy .....847632

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Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Randa Shabin .....995170  
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

#### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111  
Civil Defence Department .....661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police .....192, 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade .....617101  
Blood Bank .....775121  
Highway Police .....843402  
Traffic Police .....896390  
Public Security Dept. ....630321  
Hotel Complaints .....605800  
Price Complaints .....661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints .....897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs .....661101  
Jordan Television .....773111  
Radio Jordan .....774111  
Water Authority .....680100  
Electric Power Co. ....636381  
RJ Flight Information .....08-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

#### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
Hussein Medical Centre .....813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity .....644281/6  
Akileh Maternity .....642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362  
Malhas, J. Amman .....636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071  
Shmeisani Hospital .....669131  
University Hospital .....845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital .....667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali .....666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen .....777101/3  
Al-Bashir .....775111/26  
Army, Marka .....891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital .....602240/50  
Amal Hospital .....674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....865199

ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital .....(09)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital .....(09)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital .....(09)986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital .....(09)990990

#### IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital .....(02)275555  
Greek Catholic Hospital .....(02)127275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital .....(02)247100  
AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital .....(03)314111  
FOR THE TRAVELLER  
QUEEN ALIA  
INTERNATIONAL

#### AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

#### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:45 .....Beirut (RJ)  
11:00 .....Casablanca (RJ)  
11:30 .....Milan, Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:20 .....Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)  
13:15 .....London (RJ)  
13:25 .....Cairo (RJ)  
17:30 .....Larnaca (RJ)  
22:25 .....Al Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
23:00 .....Muscat (RJ)  
23:45 .....Sanaa (RJ)  
00:20 .....Damascus (RJ)  
02:30 .....Dubai (add) (RJ)  
Other Flights  
06:15 .....Istanbul (TK)  
08:45 .....Beirut (ME)  
09:10 .....London (BA)  
12:00 .....Khartoum (SD)  
15:00 .....Bahrain (GF)  
15:50 .....Vienna (OS)  
21:10 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
23:15 .....Cairo (MS)  
23:55 .....Damascus, Paris (AF)  
02:30 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
04:00 .....Athens (OA)

19:50 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
20:15 .....Dubai (EK)  
21:10 .....Paris, Damascus (AF)  
21:10 .....Beirut (ME)  
22:15 .....Cairo (MS)  
23:30 .....Athens (OA)  
01:20 .....Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)

#### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
08:05 .....Sanaa (RJ)  
08:05 .....Damascus (RJ)  
09:30 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
09:45 .....New Delhi (RJ)  
10:20 .....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:25 .....Beirut (RJ)  
17:15 .....Cairo (RJ)  
17:30 .....London (RJ)  
17:40 .....New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
19:00 .....Bangkok, Larnaca (RJ)  
22:20 .....Casablanca (RJ)  
04:10 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)  
Other Flights  
10:45 .....Khartoum (SD)  
14:10 .....Bahrain (GF)  
15:05 .....Vienna (OS)





Defendant Ahmad Dakamseh confers with his lawyer Hussein Mjafi during the court session Sunday (Photo by Youssef Allan)

## Court hears 4 more Israeli witnesses in Dakamseh case

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four more Israeli witnesses for the prosecution appeared Sunday at the military court in the case of Corporal Ahmad Dakamseh, the Jordanian soldier charged with killing seven Israeli schoolgirls in Baqura in March.

The Israeli witnesses, who were all injured in the March 13, 1997 shooting incident, described the dramatic morning incident, in Sunday's four-hour court session.

Kerin Ivri, 14, who spoke through an interpreter, told the court she was struck with a bullet in the waist as she was trying to rescue her friend who was also hit.

"At that moment, I heard the Jordanian soldiers shouting: He is crazy, he is crazy," said Ms. Ivri, adding that the man who did the shooting appeared normal. Ms. Ivri said that she understands some Arabic.

While leaving the witness stand and upon seeing Cpl. Dakamseh in his cell behind her, Ms. Ivri looked at the defendant, rushed towards her mother and burst into tears.

Ms. Ivri's identical twin sister, Hella, testified that she was hit in the left thigh as she was attempting to escape from the shooting scene.

A third Israeli schoolgirl, Aurant Borgouger, 13, said some Jordanian soldiers tried to assist her after she was shot in the left arm, "but I descended from their truck in fear and ran to our bus."

Roza Himi, 42, the teacher who was accompanying the schoolgirls, who

did not wish to swear on the Torah, but pledged to tell the truth, said she started shouting at the girls to run towards the hill, when the shooting started.

"The Jordanian soldier followed us, and when I lifted my head I saw him shooting randomly in our direction," Ms. Himi told a packed courtroom.

Some of the victims' families, who attended the court session, burst into tears when Ms. Himi began her testimony.

As in the last session, Defence Attorney Hussein Mjafi contested the admission of Israeli witnesses at a Jordanian court and questioned the value of their testimonies as most witnesses "refused to swear on the Torah."

The three schoolgirls did not take the oath because the court said they were under the age of 15.

Attorney Mjafi further charged that the girls' testimony in court should not be accepted because some of the Israeli witnesses' names were not registered on the prosecution's witnesses list.

The court tribunal rejected Mr. Mjafi's pleas and ordered that the session proceed normally.

Attorney Mjafi then asked whether the Israeli witnesses had any identification documents on their persons, but none of the girls carried any identification.

All four witnesses confirmed that some of the schoolgirls visiting the area on that morning did bring cameras, which they kept in their bus as instructed by their escort, "because photography was prohibited in that area."

The defendant told a three-member investigation

committee in March that he shot the schoolgirls because they provoked him by their loud laughter at seeing him performing his prayers, and by taking photos of him while he prayed.

The prosecution, however, is charging that Corp. Dakamseh had plotted to shoot the Israeli girls, and that he had previously attempted to do so.

On June 9, six Israeli witnesses made history testifying for the first time in a Jordanian court.

Meanwhile, Military Prosecutor Mohammad Hajar presented medical reports that said that Cpl. Dakamseh "was mentally sane and was not injured or hurt after the shooting incident."

Prosecutor Hajar told reporters following the conclusion of the court session that he decided not to subpoena the last five Israeli witnesses in the case, to "avoid repetitive testimonies."

The military tribunal adjourned the session for today to hear the two doctors who examined Cpl. Dakamseh following the shooting incident.

Cpl. Dakamseh's wife, Fatmeh Hawatneh, 25, who along with members of her family were barred from attending yesterday's session for the second time, told reporters that she is proud of her husband.

"Yes I am Ahmad's (Cpl. Dakamseh) wife and I am proud of it and lift my head high for what he did," Ms. Hawatneh, a mother of three children, said.

"If he is imprisoned or executed, we will take pride in it, and if he is executed, one million will be born in his stead," she added.

## France, Netherlands pledge \$69m to aid Jordan, Majali reports

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said Sunday that during His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Europe, France and the Netherlands agreed to grant the Kingdom \$60 million and \$9 million, respectively, to aid the Jordanian economy.

Dr. Majali said that the King's visit to Europe, which also included a working visit to Switzerland, has been successful and achieved very positive results with respect to Jordanian-European relations.

The King discussed Jordanian-European relations, European economic investments in the Kingdom and the peace process, among other issues of common concern, said the prime

minister, who accompanied the King on his European tour.

Referring to the discussions on the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the prime minister said that there was a general agreement that the peace process is a strategic necessity that requires efforts on the part of the world community to ensure its success.

"We have felt Europe's sympathy with the Palestinian and Arab cause," Dr. Majali said. "The Europeans are now awaiting an Israeli initiative to remove the obstacles that impede the peace process."

Referring to Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq, the prime minister said that

King Hussein had entrusted HRH Crown Prince Hassan to discuss this subject with the Turkish leaders and added that Ankara has reassured Prince Hassan that its incursion was a temporary operation to stop Kurdish rebels from launching attacks against Turkish forces. He said that Turkish forces have begun withdrawing from Iraqi lands, and Turkish leaders have reaffirmed their keenness on Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Dr. Majali disclosed that he has conveyed Turkey's reassurances to the Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Zou'bi in a telephone conversation.

He also said that the U.S. House of Representatives

announcement last week that Jerusalem is the united capital of Israel pre-empted the final status negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis as prescribed by the Oslo Accords, which defer discussions on Jerusalem to the final phase of negotiations.

The prime minister also commented on U.S. economic aid to Jordan, saying that "we would like to see the greatest possible aid coming to Jordan, but we cannot force others to grant us this aid simply because we are involved in the peace process. Peace is in our own interest as it ensures the restoration of our rights."

On his plans to visit Arab countries, Dr. Majali said:

"Jordan believes in maintaining the strongest possible relations with all Arab states. I have visited Qatar and will visit the United Arab Emirates next week and later Tunisia and afterwards Cairo to attend the joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee meetings early next month."

As to the general elections, the prime minister said they are due to be held on schedule adding that the Jordanian professional unions ought to dedicate their attention to matters pertaining to their respective professions promising the unions government backing in this endeavour.

## Two Egyptians hanged for murdering coworker

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two men convicted of murdering a 22-year-old man in the Jordan Valley in October 1994, were hanged at Swaga prison, south of Amman, at dawn Sunday, judicial sources said. Mohammad Mahmoud Asswan, 38, and Kaboud Rasslan, 20, both Egyptian nationals, were the fifth and sixth people to be executed in the Kingdom since the beginning of 1997.

The two were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court after being found guilty of murdering their co-worker Jamal Mohammad in a farm in Ghor Al Safi on Oct. 3, 1994. The court said that the two plotted to kill Mohammad after encountering problems with him over a gas cylinder, \$3 and a knife.

On the night of the murder, the two entered the room Mohammad was sleeping in, struck him several times on the head with a shovel until he died, then dragged his body to a nearby farm where they hid it.

A Royal Decree was issued recently approving the death sentence after the case was reviewed by the Court of Cassation.

## Prince Abdullah urges ministries to integrate tourism projects

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, Sunday urged the Ministries of Information and Tourism and Antiquities to design integrated tourist programmes to market Jordan in the Arab World and abroad.

During a visit to the two ministries, where he met with Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi and Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji, respectively, Prince Abdullah, who earlier in the day was sworn in as Regent, stressed the importance of cooperation between the two ministries.

Information Ministry officials reviewed tourism promotion programmes on television and programmes for training for local tourist guides. They also briefed the Prince on Jordan Radio and Television Corporation's preparations for coverage of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Prince Abdullah stated the necessity of implementing the 1985 Radio and Television Law that enables the corporation to operate with financial and administrative independence.



His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, Sunday confers with Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi (left), the ministry's Secretary General Mohammad Amin (second right) and (right) Director of the Press and Publications Department Nayef Mawla (Petra photo)

dence.

During his visit to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities where he met Mr. Biltaji and Secretary General Akram Masarweh the Prince said that the ministry should better promote lesser-known tourism sites such as the Desert

Castles in order to maximise the benefits from them, and reiterated the importance of environmental protection at Wadi Rum, Petra, the Aqaba beaches and other environmentally fragile sites.

Mr. Biltaji outlined the Ministry of Tourism's

strategy and discussed progress in other tourism projects, and Mr. Masarweh described on-going preparations for the annual Jerash Festival, scheduled for late July. Dozens of Arab and international folklore troupes will participate in the festival.

Her Royal Highness Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan Sunday lays the foundation stone of Al Hassan Tower at Ghamadan National Park, south of Amman and unveils the tower's plaque. The tower, which is 1,200-square metres, will serve as a permanent headquarters for the Crown Prince's Award. At a special ceremony, held to mark Jordan's Independence and Army Days, Princess Rahma presented gifts to sponsors of the project and was briefed on the project's design by the supervising designer, Jaafar Touqan. The tower, which will be built on a five dunum plot of land, is donated by Amman Municipality (Petra photo)



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Jordan to open embassy in Kuala Lumpur

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree Sunday approved a Cabinet decision for the opening of a permanent Jordanian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. Another Royal Decree was issued for the acceptance of the Sultanate of Oman's nomination of Sheikh Hamed Ben Hilal Ben Ali Al Muari as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Royal Court. A third Royal Decree approved Iceland's nomination of Tomas Tomasson as Iceland's non-resident ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Royal Court. A Royal Decree also approved a Cabinet decision appointing Theodore Mikolas as honorary Jordanian consul in Hungary. And a fifth Royal Decree approved another Cabinet decision for the promotion of a high Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomat Khaldoun Tharwar Talhouni to the rank of ambassador as of this month.

### CAA to participate in Paris exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Director General Jasser Zayyad on Sunday headed for Paris to attend an aviation exhibition which lasts until June 22. The exhibition includes the latest inventions in the field of aviation.

### Seminar on combating drugs held

AMMAN (Petra) — A seminar on combating drug smuggling was held at the Public Security Department (PSD). Assistant to the PSD's Director General Mohammad Saeed Tarazi addressed the audience saying that Jordan exerts all efforts to combat smuggling and had foiled many smuggling attempts in the past and that the department in cooperation with the Ministry of Health tries its best to help rehabilitate addicts at certain centres. The seminar is held in cooperation with the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### FILM

"Vincent, Paul, Francois et les Autres" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, at 8:30 p.m.

### PLAY

"Adam — Alone" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

### LECTURE

"Hospitals and Medical Care in the Medieval Islamic World" by Dr. Yasser Tabbas at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682).

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Paintings by contemporary Iraqi artists entitled "Ecology and Environment in Iraqi Art" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until July 12 (except Thursdays).

\* Photo exhibition of Hong Kong, sponsored by the Chinese embassy, at the Royal Cultural Centre, until June 19.

\* Works by Abdul Basit Naqqash and Sa'd Hussein entitled "Heritage and Culture" at the gallery of the Jordan Plastic Artists Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 21.

\* Art exhibition by Ibrahim Al Abdali at the Orfene Art Gallery, Shmeisani, Issam Ajlouni Street, until June 19.

\* Spring Exhibition of Plastic Art '97 at Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain, until June 30.

\* "One-of-a-Kind" artists' book exhibit, at the American Centre, Abdoun, until June 25.

\* Exhibition of works by Farouq Lambaz at Darat Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh, until June 19.

## Khreishan cautions against indiscriminate use of pesticides

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Khreishan Sunday opened a seminar on the adverse effects of pesticides on the environment with a call for stricter control on their use.

"It is true that the pesticides eliminate pests that adversely affect agricultural production, but residues of the poisonous substances remain in the ground and pose danger to various living creatures, crops and humans, particularly when people are unaware of proper methods of applying them," warned the minister

during his opening speech. Pesticides are poisonous and dangerous substances which tend to pollute the environment and poison people and animals, said Mr. Khreishan. Therefore, their different uses should be more strictly controlled and people should be advised on proper safety measures when handling them.

The minister said that Jordan has taken important actions to protect the environment from pollution and has introduced an environmental protection law to help it achieve that goal.

"We believe in a balanced relationship between devel-

opment and environmental protection, and it is incumbent on us to plan our development in a manner that respects our air and soil," added the minister.

Saeed Alloush, president of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), noted in his address that pesticides have played a leading role in boosting agricultural production and food output around the world, but regrettably, chemical pesticides have had negative effects on the environment and public health.

The adverse effects of pesticides, he said, result from improper handling and

usage of pesticides. He emphasised the necessity of legislation and education at the national and regional levels relevant to the use of pesticides.

Dr. Alloush called on farmers to avoid repeated and intensive use of pesticides within confined areas of land, warning that such practices can poison the underground and surface water resources.

He noted that the RSS is willing to cooperate with various organisations in structuring the proper use of pesticides in order to minimise damage to the environment and human health.



# Sabre-rattling as Congo ceasefire hangs in balance

BRAZZAVILLE (AFP) — Congo's fragile ceasefire hung in the balance Sunday as army and rebel factions fired tank and mortar shells at each other's positions, though observers said the two sides were not yet seriously engaged in fighting.

The Cobra militias of opposition leader Denis Sassou Nguesso bombarded the international airport where troops loyal to President Pascal Lissouba responded with anti-aircraft and mortar fire, following a night punctuated with sporadic mortar and automatic weapons fire.

The intensity of the overnight firing was slightly up on previous nights, with a tank at the northeastern edge of the airport firing several rounds at the airbase buildings.

The two sides used a lull Saturday, during talks aimed at ending Brazzaville's 10 days of bloodshed, to dig in around the airport — a strategic objective which would allow reinforcements to be flown

## Pope pleads for peace in Africa

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II Sunday pleaded for an end to the fighting in Sierra Leone and the Republic of Congo in his first major appearance since returning from a long trip to Poland.

"Violence does not cease to plunge certain peoples of Africa into the greatest suffering," he said, referring to civil wars in the two countries.

Pope John Paul appeared in good form during his regular Sunday blessing in St. Peter's Square, after returning last Tuesday from an 11-day trip to his home country.

Visiting shrines to the Virgin Mary in Poland, he was returning to his roots and receiving new strength from them, he said.

The Pope also saluted "our Orthodox brothers" who celebrated Pentecost Sunday.

The airport is protected by a French contingent of 1,250 soldiers who are preparing to leave Congo after having evacuated most of Brazzaville's expatriate population.

Observers saw Cobra militias advancing slowly towards the airport, backed by two T-55 tanks. The tanks advanced around 500 metres, firing around 20 shells, then withdrew a short distance, keeping up a sporadic bombardment.

Cobra forces also advanced a few hundred metres towards the army-occupied parliament building. However the two sides were not in contact and the bombardments were largely ineffective, French military sources said.

The ground gained, mostly open space, had not been secured, the sources said, describing the manoeuvres as "pressure." A Congolese official said Saturday that a battle for the airport was certain if the French with-

drew.

French troops had the T-55 tanks targeted by Milan missiles in case the Cobra militias should attack their quarters at the airport, where several dozen people are still waiting to be evacuated.

The morning evacuation flights were cancelled. French planners have pledged to complete the evacuation by 1600 GMT Sunday and then to begin the troop withdrawal.

Five flights were planned for the day, four by the French contingent and one by the United Nations, for Pointe-Noire on Congo's Atlantic coast and for the Gabonese capital Libreville, according to army sources.

Peace talks had appeared to falter Saturday, though a summit involving eight representatives of the rival Congolese leaders is to take place Monday in Libreville, according to U.N. envoy Mohammad Sahnoun who visited the Congolese capital Saturday.



Soldiers loyal to President Pascal Lissouba wave as they patrol the centre of Brazzaville. The United States, France and the United Nations threw their weight behind efforts to end a bloody showdown between Congo's President Pascal Lissouba and a former Marxist military leader Denis Sassou Nguesso (Reuters photo)

## Indian tragedy could have been averted — fire chief

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A horrific blaze that sparked a stampede and killed 57 people at a cinema in the Indian capital could have been averted, the city's fire chief said in remarks published Sunday.

Satish Dheri said he had earlier suggested the relocation of an electric transformer in the basement of the cinema which has been blamed for Friday's tragedy, the Asian Age reported.

"When the transformer exploded a couple of years back, I had made a strong plea for its relocation. I said that such transformers should be kept outside and not inside places like cinemas," Mr. Dheri said.

"Some fussy official in (the Electricity Department) had problems with my suggestion," Mr. Dheri said. The blaze broke out when the transformer at the basement of the five-storey cinema building exploded due

to a short circuit, causing panic as more than 1,000 viewers tried to escape from flames and smoke.

The explosion set several cars parked nearby on fire. Most of the 57 deaths were due to suffocation. The others were burned. Some families were almost wiped out. More than 100 others were hospitalised, and doctors said 10 of them were in critical condition.

Mr. Dheri, who fell from the first floor of the cinema while supervising rescue operations and is now hospitalised, said the deaths could have been minimised if his suggestion to shift the transformer was carried out.

The Uphaar cinema was showing the star-studded film, *Border*, a Hindi movie about the 1971 India-Pakistan war when tragedy struck.

The Uphaar Cinema has been closed down. But other cinemas screening *Border* ran to packed houses here

Sunday. In some, the police were summoned to control surging crowds.

"The fire has not had any effect on the people wanting to see the film," said P.D. Menon, a manager at Chakravya Cinema. "There have been no cancellations. We have got calls to know if tickets are still available."

The police Saturday ruled out sabotage but arrested four officials of the cinema and charged them with negligence in maintaining and repairing the transformer. The Electricity Department suspended five engineers on similar grounds.

New Delhi chief minister Sahib Singh Verma accepted moral responsibility for the disaster as the city mourned the dead.

"So many lives could have not been lost if the cars were not parked (near the transformer). Only the transformer would have caught fire, which could

have been easily controlled. "Even if that was not the case, the magnitude of the tragedy would have been far less had the ushers not locked the (cinema's) balcony doors and had been trained to deal with such situations," he said.

The electricity wing pledged to come down hard on its staff. "I shall not spare anybody," said Naween Chawla, who heads New Delhi's Electricity Department.

"When (our) officials repaired the transformer (early Friday), they should have realised they were dealing with the lives of hundreds of people and not just an equipment."

"If they were not sure of the quality of the repair undertaken, they could have disconnected power supply and got it replaced. The theatre could have managed with generators or even cancelled the show."

## Croatia goes to polls for presidential elections

ZAGREB (AFP) — Croatia went to the polls Sunday for presidential elections in which President Franjo Tudjman, 75, was expected to win a third term.

Polling stations opened at 7:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) and were due to close 12 hours later, with first results expected early Monday. Mr. Tudjman, wearing a suit and accompanied by his wife Ankica, turned up early to vote in bright sunshine at a polling station in Central Zagreb.

"I think that the elections, like all the previous ones, will help to reinforce the democratic order and that the electorate will show its political maturity in today's vote," he said, in remarks

broadcast by Croatian Radio.

Opinion polls last week gave a 40 point lead to the incumbent, who has played on his "Father of the Nation" status throughout the campaign.

He is standing against Vlado Gotovac, 66, of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSL) who is representing nine opposition parties, and Zdravko Tomac, 60, of the left-wing Social Democratic Party (SDP).

If no candidate wins an outright majority in the first round, a second round will be held two weeks later.

Posters proclaiming "Tudjman, Croatian president" were plastered on the streets along the route to

another polling station in central Zagreb where an elderly man in his sixties, dressed in Alpine clothing, had cast his vote.

Asked who he had chosen, he said "I voted for Tudjman, what a question!" The vote comes hot on the heels of parliamentary and local elections in April which saw the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) increasing its majority in the Upper House and winning almost all the regions.

Mr. Tudjman's campaign has been energetic for a man who was hospitalised in Washington in November amid reports of cancer.

His office says only that the president was suffering from a stomach ulcer and

swollen lymph glands and has since fully recovered.

The Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe has sent over 100 monitors to the elections in which 4,020,312 people are registered to vote, including 377,705 abroad in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, the United States, Canada and Australia.

Polling stations also opened Sunday in Eastern Slavonia, the last Serb-held part of Croatia, a U.N. spokesman told AFP.

The U.N. Security Council is to decide soon when the area will return to Croatian control, which must happen by January at the latest.

## Clinton says U.S. education risks resegregation

SAN DIEGO (R) — President Bill Clinton warned Saturday that the United States risks a return to racial segregation in higher education more than 30 years after the civil rights revolution.

Mr. Clinton sounded the alarm bell in a widely awaited speech that launched a year-long look at ways of solving racial problems and bringing the country's diverse population closer together.

"Can we become 'one America' in the 21st century?" he asked an estimated 22,000 people attending an outdoor commencement ceremony at the University of California at San Diego.

Drawing on his own experience as a son of the South who witnessed the civil rights upheavals of the 1960s to end segregation policies at universities and elsewhere, Mr. Clinton acknowledged that "history reminds us that it will be hard" to breach the racial divide.

"We have torn down the

barriers in our laws. Now we must break down the barriers in our lives, our minds and our hearts," he said.

He said a sign of a return to segregation in higher education was heralded by California voters' approval of last year's proposition 209, which ordered the repeal of affirmative action programmes granting preferences to minorities on student acceptance within the state's university system and on government hiring.

The directive has been ruled constitutional by a federal appeals court but has been blocked from taking effect by more legal action.

Still, Mr. Clinton said, the effect of the decision has been dramatic because it prompted minority enrollments in law schools and other graduate programmes to plummet.

"Soon the same will likely happen in undergraduate education. We must not re-segregate our higher education or leave it to the private

universities to do public work," he said.

On the platform sitting stone-faced as Mr. Clinton spoke was Ward Connerly, the chief advocate of proposition 209. He ran radio ads attacking Mr. Clinton's speech even before Mr. Clinton delivered it. Mr. Connerly was attending by virtue of being a regent of the university.

"To those who opposed affirmative action, I ask you to come up with an alternative," Mr. Clinton said. "I would embrace it if I could find a better way. And to those of us who still support it, I say we should continue to stand for it. We should reach out to those who disagree."

With Mr. Clinton were the seven members of the advisory board he appointed Thursday to conduct town hall meetings, examine the state of race relations in the country and in a year give Americans a report outlining the problems and possible solutions.

Board Chairman John

Hope Franklin, 82, told reporters the legacy of slavery must be addressed by all Americans but he stopped short of saying Mr. Clinton should issue an apology for Africans having been enslaved by European settlers.

"Hear me, hear me now," Mr. Franklin said. "It's more than the slavery issue. It is the ideological underpinnings of slavery, the development of a philosophy that blacks were inferior, that they were physiologically and intellectually and ethically inferior."

A Gallup poll this week found persistent gaps in attitudes and perceptions between blacks and whites. For example it said whites characterised themselves as having very little personal prejudice against blacks, but that blacks feel whites have higher levels of racial prejudice than whites believe about themselves.

## 1st election campaign for 12 years kicks off in Liberia

MONROVIA (AFP) — Eleven candidates, including three former warlords and a lone woman, Monday launched their campaigns for the first presidential race to be held in war-ravaged Liberia for more than a decade.

Campaigning officially ends July 18, the day before the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The last presidential poll in Liberia was held in 1985. Four years later a devastating civil war broke out after Charles Taylor led a rebellion to topple the dictatorial regime of Samuel Doe, who was executed in 1991 by a former henchman of Mr. Taylor's.

This year's elections form the culmination of a revised peace accord signed in Abuja last August by the principle parties to the conflict, which left some 200,000 civilians dead and the country in ruins.

Three of the war's key players are taking their battle to the ballot box: Mr. Taylor, at the helm of the National Patriotic Party, Alhaji Kromah of the All Liberia Coalition Party and George Booley of the National Democratic Party of Liberia.

"I am the only strong person to lead this country following seven years of war," Mr. Taylor told reporters at a recent political rally.

Mr. Taylor is campaigning on a ticket of national unity and reconciliation.

The only woman standing, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former minister and until recently a senior official at the United Nations Development Programme, represents the Unity Party and enjoys the backing of the True Whig Party, which ruled Liberia for more than a century.

Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf has said her administration would focus on reconciliation, trimming government and privatising some public corporations.

Chosen by a now crumbled seven-party alliance, former Minister Cletus Wotson has been promoting education as the election's principle issue. He runs for the Liberia Unification Party (LUP) and the Liberia Action Party (LAP).

Mr. Kromah's platform stresses the importance of international and regional security in exploiting natural resources and promoting economic reconstruction.

Just 37 days ahead of the vote, election analysts say preparations for the polls remain poor.

## 2 more bodies found after Bangladesh boat capsizes; 50 feared drowned

DHAKA (AFP) — Navy divers joined search operations Sunday for passengers still missing and feared drowned after a large boat capsized two days ago in northern Bangladesh, officials said.

Two bodies were recovered late Saturday near the site of the capsizing on the Dhanu River, in Netrakona district, bringing to five the number of confirmed deaths, a district official told AFP.

Survivors had earlier put the toll at 50 among the estimated 100 passengers and crew on the boat which went down Friday at a location about 110 kilometres north of the capital Dhaka.

"So far the boat could not be salvaged and navy divers joined rescuers today to

help salvage the vessel," a Netrakona district official said Sunday.

The two bodies were found further downstream from the capsizing site.

Police and district officials were still unable to put a more exact number on the number of people still missing and presumed drowned.

"It is very sketchy — but there is hardly anybody looking for their missing relatives," one officer said.

A preliminary investigation into the accident has put the blame on an error made by the boat's driver in navigating the river's tricky waters, officials have said.

## Japan to join U.S. missile project

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan is expected to jointly develop with the United States a lightweight ship-launched missile with ranges of up to 3,000 kilometres against incoming missiles.

The TMD system would detect an enemy missile via satellite, determine its flight path and intercept it with a combination of high- and low-altitude missiles.

Government sources were quoted by the daily as saying that Japan's Defence Agency was in favour of taking part in the LEAP project because it would be effective given Japan's topography.

The agency has earmarked about 460 million yen (\$4 million) to study the technical possibilities and cost-effectiveness of TMD. Although the agency would participate in developing LEAP, it would delay a decision on whether to introduce the TMD system in Japan because of concerns over the cost estimated at more than several hundred billion yen.

Defence spending is scheduled to be frozen or reduced in each of the three years starting in the year from April 1998 because of government budget constraints.

According to U.S. estimates, the cost of joint LEAP development would come to \$2 billion.

## Mobutu's Presidential Guard go to Central Africa with arms

KINSHASA (AFP) — The guard of ousted Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko have slipped into the Central African Republic with their weapons, creating a "very worrying" situation there, a senior U.N. official said Saturday.

"The Bangui government told me they belonged to (Mobutu's Guard) and they had entered Central African Republic territory with their weapons," Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) Sergio Vieira De Mello told reporters.

Unconfirmed reports said more than 9,000 of Mr. Mobutu's troops had arrived in Central Africa since Laurent Kabila's rebels renamed Zaire the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) last month when they captured the capital Kinshasa.

Mr. Mobutu's soldiers had not been registered by the office of the UNHCR, Mr. Vieira De Mello told journalists here following a trip to the Central African Republic.

"It's a new and very worrying situation. Quick and concrete steps must be taken to settle this problem before it degenerates and contributes to more instability in the region," the official said. "Any government fears the arrival on its territory of armed elements from a neighbouring country," he said. When asked if Bangui was worried about the troops.

## Kabila seizes S. African jet

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Laurent Kabila, president of the new Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, has seized a private South African Learjet after claiming its "rude" pilot stood him up, a press report said here Sunday.

Mr. Kabila founded the jet in the southern province capital of Lubumbashi after the pilot, who agreed to fly him to a May 9 meeting with President Nelson Mandela in South Africa, left without him after waiting for six hours, Johannesburg's Sunday Independent newspaper said.

"The pilot was rude to me," Mr. Kabila told the aircraft's owners, according to the newspaper.

"It's a completely legitimate concern, especially in the current circumstances in the Central African Republic," he said. The government of President Angele Felix Patasse has faced several mutinies this year. Ex-soldiers from the former Zaire Armed Forces were also "in large numbers in Tanzania and Zambia," he said. "It is also said that there were some in Congo-Brazzaville, but I can't confirm this." Those who arrived in Zambia and Tan-

zania were disarmed. Sooner or later they will have to be repatriated. We have discussed this with the authorities in Kinshasa," Mr. Vieira De Mello said.

But he added "there are not to my knowledge Zairean (soldiers) in Angolan territory."

Mr. Vieira De Mello also said the UNHCR will over the next few weeks try to separate former soldiers suspected of genocide from Rwandan civilian refugees still in the former Zaire. "First teams" should arrive "in a week or ten days" in the DRC, he said.

UNHCR figures say between 100,000 and 200,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, who fled their country in 1994, missed the chance to return home with hundreds of thousands of others from mid-November. Out of this number only 20,000 are located in the former Zaire and 20,000 others are in neighbouring Congo.

Extremist Hutu troops are accused of having committed the worst atrocities during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which cost the lives of more than 500,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

He said he was hoping for cooperation from the new DRC to set up a system to make the distinction between civilians and former soldiers, although he said former army personnel were not necessarily guilty of genocide.





A Cambodian man examines photographs of Cambodians executed by the Khmer Rouge during their brutal reign of terror, 1975-1979, at the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh Sunday. Responsible for an estimated one million genocidal deaths, the future of the Khmer Rouge as a guerrilla army appears to be coming to an end but political analysts are predicting their entry into mainstream Cambodian politics (Reuters photo)

## Cambodians remember horror of Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH (R) — The news that Khmer Rouge supreme Pol Pot is on the run having brought back bitter memories for Cambodians who suffered under the 1975-79 "killing fields" regime.

But confused by conflicting reports and the intricate manoeuvres of Cambodia's political factions, most said there was only one thing they knew for sure — that Mr. Pol Pot deserves to die.

But Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan and others should be allowed to make peace, enter politics and be judged by the electorate, according to a cross-section of citizens questioned in Phnom Penh Sunday.

"I think Pol Pot is the target of the people," said Mean Buntha, a 42-year-old fruit seller.

"I don't understand politics... but if Pol Pot dies and Khieu Samphan decides to form a political party, O.K. if people like him, they'll vote. If they don't, they'll vote against him," he told Reuters.

A senior Cambodian military official has said the re-veiled Mr. Pol Pot was surrounded in a jungle about 20 kilometres east of his northern stronghold of Anlong Veng.

Deputy Chief of General Staff Nhek Bun Chhay said Mr. Pol Pot and about 250 to 300 of his fighters are under attack by 1,000 rebels from his own army who

## New U.N. representative arrives in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The new U.N. representative for U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan arrived in Cambodia Sunday and pledged to use his office to encourage peace as his first priority.

"I want to associate myself with the peace process, because peace is the key for a country that has seen so much war," Lakhan Measara said on his arrival at Phnom Penh's Pochentong International Airport.

Mr. Measara was involved with the Cambodian peace process in the early 1990s, participating in the landmark 1991 Paris Peace Conference which ended with an accord that technically ended the country's long-running civil war.

The former Indian diplomat, who was also active in planning the international community's efforts to help reconstruct and develop Cambodia as well as implement bureaucratic reforms, replaces career U.N. employee Benny Widyono in the position.

Mr. Widyono, an Indonesian who served as governor of Northern Siem Reap province during the United Nations transitional authority in Cambodia, was replaced after he fell victim to bickering between Cambodia's two prime ministers.

First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh opposed Mr. Widyono's replacement to the position while Second Prime Minister Hun Sen supported it.

Mr. Measara's arrival coincides with confused reports that the Khmer Rouge rebels could be on the edge of collapse following the murders of Defence Minister Son Sen and his influential wife, reportedly ordered by the elusive guerrilla leader Pol Pot.

have turned against him. His forces were holding at least three senior Khmer Rouge officials, including Mr. Khieu Samphan, as hostages, he said.

Defence chief Son Sen and 11 family members were said to have been brutally murdered before the rebels fled Anlong Veng.

Ol Mony, a 49-year-old battery shop owner, said he

the Khmer Rouge regime and public face of the rebels, was an intellectual who should be allowed to enter the arena of politics, where he could be judged by the people.

"The Khmer Rouge is finished. Now we will fight each other with politics, not with weapons," he said.

More than one million Cambodians died of starvation, executions, hard labour and disease during the Khmer Rouge's 1975-79 disastrous experiment with total communism.

The guerrillas emptied Phnom Penh at gun point, forcing the sick from their beds. Women, children and the elderly were sent into the countryside to work in vast and brutal labour camps.

In this Buddhist society, there is a sense that such horrible acts do not go unanswered.

"Under Pol Pot, the whole of the Cambodian people lived in a prison without walls or a roof. Sin must be paid by sin," said 50-year-old restaurant owner Chhum Kimheng.

Chan Bopha, a greying 45-year-old primary school teacher, lost her husband to Mr. Son Sen's torture centre at Tuol Sleng. Two of her brothers were also killed.

"I hope Pol Pot will be killed by someone one day, just as he killed the Cambodian people," she said.

## Anti-Taleban alliance forms new Afghan government

KABUL (AFP) — The anti-Taleban alliance has announced the formation of a new Afghan government which hopes to attract the support of "intellectuals and technocrats," sources in the opposition-held northern region said Sunday.

But what the new "government" can offer the country is unclear, analysts said, as the Taleban control two-thirds of Afghanistan.

The new government is a coalition between former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was ousted from Kabul by the Taleban in September, ethnic Uzbek leader General Abdul Malik, and a faction of the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat.

Journalists in northern Afghanistan could gather few details from spokesmen for the anti-Taleban alliance, but clearly its government exists more on paper than in reality.

Mindful of their past failure to establish peace and security when based in Kabul from 1992-96, the proponents of the new so-called government are trying to broaden their base by inviting fresh personalities on board.

Presumably the intellectuals and technocrats that are counted on to give the new government added credibility would be drawn from the vast pool of expatriate Afghans now living in Europe and the United States.

With little likelihood of an imminent peace being brokered between the Taleban and opposition forces, it is extremely doubtful that any overseas Afghans will return to war-torn Afghanistan from the comfort of their Western homes, analysts said.

It was not immediately announced how the composite factions in the anti-Taleban alliance would share

the senior positions of authority among themselves.

Gen. Malik, who mutinied against his former boss, Abdul Rashid Dostam, and sided briefly with the Taleban before switching back with Mr. Rabbani, is said to be in line for "an important post."

Gen. Malik's ethnic Uzbek army still controls five Northwestern Afghan provinces and parts of two more.

Mr. Rabbani's top Commander Ahmad Shah Masood controls three provinces in the northeast, and contests Parwan north of Kabul with the Taleban.

The Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction under Karim Khalili controls central Bamian province, site of the famous giant historical Buddha statues that the Taleban threatened to blow-up if they captured the area.

The spirited defence put up by the Shiites against repeated Taleban offensives against their principal front-

line at Shibar Pass must surely put Mr. Khalili up for an equally important post in the new government.

The proposed new government is a last minute reprieve for Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Masood, who appeared to face imminent defeat following Gen. Malik's defection to the Taleban in May.

The Taleban's occupation of Northwest Afghanistan was short-lived because they reportedly violated their agreement with Gen. Malik.

Whether Gen. Malik can still be trusted must be a key concern of Mr. Masood, whose ethnic Tajik forces are not strong enough to take on the predominantly ethnic Pushtoon Taleban by themselves, analysts said.

What the proposed new anti-Taleban government can deliver by way of a solution to the Afghan crisis is unclear. The only certainty is continued fighting, they said.

## Mobs go on arson spree on East Java island

JAKARTA (AFP) — Hundreds of people rampaged through a town on the East Java island of Madura, torching shops and a cinema as well as a church and a Buddhist temple in the latest flare-up of violence in Indonesia, officials said Sunday.

"I do not know the reason behind it, but hundreds of people disrupted a ceremony at the central square of Bangkalan Saturday night," an official of a political party chapter there said by telephone.

The official, who asked not to be named, said a group of people began by attacking officials attending a thanksgiving ceremony for a town cleanliness award won by Bangkalan.

A larger mob formed after the clashes and set fire to a nearby cinema and the Tri Dharma Buddhist Temple, and at least two cars as well as pelting a shop in a nearby shopping street, the official said. "But order and security was reestablished around 11:00 p.m. and today (Sunday) the town's situation is returning to normal," the official added.

Three truckloads of soldiers and two armoured vehicles have been drafted in to the town, the Kompas daily said. A church source said the mob burned at least three shops, the Tri Dharma Temple in the Chinatown of Bangkalan, and a Pentecostal Church, and pelted the glass front of the local post office.

"There is still concern among the population over widespread violations and fraud during the elections, but officials are just having fun and being merry. They (the people) just felt insulted," said Fuad Amin, the head of the local chapter of the Muslim-led United Development Party

(PPP).

The Bangkalan PPP has accused officials of poll frauds during the May 29 general elections and has refused to sign and endorse the official election results.

Mr. Amin also said religious leaders and the government had agreed three years ago to hold popular folk music concerts outside the town in a stadium, but this agreement, again, was ignored.

Madura is a stronghold of conservative Islam.

"I did not see it myself but people have been saying that one of the adjutants to the head of the district was stabbed during the clash at the square," the church source said.

The Kompas daily said at least one government official had been injured by a machete during the scuffle with the rioters during the ceremony.

The incident started after officials tried to shoo away youths who had climbed on a podium where a popular Dangdut folk music group was performing, the church source said.

Second Sergeant Suwaji of the Bangkalan police confirmed mob violence had taken place late Saturday, that one shop was attacked and "for the moment, it seems like the (Buddhist) temple was set on fire."

He declined to elaborate on whether there had been any casualties or arrests but said the town's security was "under control." Mr. Amin said he had received reports that at least 17 people were arrested, and added he intended to visit the police station to see the detainees later Sunday.

The Bangkalan police chief and his deputy could not be immediately reached for comment.

## Sri Lanka rejects Pakistani involvement as rebel ploy

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka Sunday denied Tamil rebel claims that Pakistan jointly planned a military offensive in the island's north and said the charge was aimed at diverting attention from huge rebel losses.

The Defence Ministry here in its first formal response said that the separatist Liberation Tigers of Ta-mil Eelam (LTTE) "fabricated a diabolical falsehood" to involve a friendly country and create disharmony.

The LTTE in a statement

from its London office said last week that Pakistani military officials participated in the planning of the current army's against them in the north of the country.

"The spreading of such blatant allegations by the LTTE... can only be seen as a desperate attempt on their part to divert the attention of the international community from the colossal losses and the defeats they face each day," the ministry said.

More than 785 people were killed according to both sides when the LTTE

mounted a ferocious attack against a key military base in the north of the country Tuesday.

The Tigers attacked the soldiers while they were on a major offensive to open a key road through rebel territory and reach the northern peninsula of Jaffna.

The Tigers said in their statement that Pakistani military officials were in the north-central town of Anuradhapura before the Sri Lankan military mounted the offensive on May 13.

Pakistan diplomats here

## Vietnam counts cost of U.S. war, 22 years on

HANOI (R) — Vietnam catalogued Sunday the appalling cost of its war against the United States and said the conflict, which ended more than 22 years ago, was still exacting a toll in lives and suffering.

The official Vietnam News Agency (VNA) said that when the war ended in 1975 three million Vietnamese had been killed, 4.4 million wounded, and two million affected by toxic chemicals including the defoliant agent orange.

It said some 50,000 children were born with deformities in the first decade after the war.

## France to reopen arms sales to Taiwan

TAIPEI (R) — France has agreed to sell 2,000 rockets to Taiwan, risking a break in a 1994 agreement with Beijing under which Paris agreed to stop arming the island, a local newspaper said Sunday.

The China Times newspaper quoted unidentified sources as saying Taiwan's Defence Ministry has signed a contract with a French manufacturer and the weapons would be shipped to Taiwan by end-1997 after obtaining an export permit from Paris.

The report said the rockets can be carried by soldiers and fired from the shoulder but gave no further details.

Beijing, Taipei's arch rival, was so angered by France's 1992 sale of 60 Mirage fighters to Taiwan that it ordered its Guangzhou consulate shut and began freezing French firms out of Chinese contracts.

Paris relented in 1994

with a vow to stop arms sales to Taiwan, though France is honouring the Mirage deal.

The 2,000 rockets would be used to beef up the army's anti-armour equipment, the report said.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry declined comment. The newspaper quoted an unidentified military officer as saying that such rocket sales were less sensitive and they were not as significant as purchasing missiles, frigates or fighter jets.

The deal showed Taiwan would have no problem to proceed with similar small purchases from France in the future, it said.

Defence Minister Chiang Chung-Ling said in March that a Mistral missile deal with France had aborted, but had not commented on reports that pressure on Paris by Communist China was to blame.

Taiwan has fared better in

the United States, managing to buy 150 F-16 jet-fighters, batteries of Gulf War-tested Patriot anti-missile missiles and 1,299 Stinger shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles despite Beijing's protests.

Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a renegade province since a civil war split them in 1949 and opposes any arms sales to the Nationalist-ruled island as infringing Chinese sovereignty.

Taipei says it must maintain a strong defence in the face of Beijing's longstanding pledge to use force against Taiwan if it abandons its pro-unification policy and opts for independence.

Beijing staged a series of war games and missile tests near Taiwan during the island's first direct presidential election in March 1996 in what it acknowledged was a bid to chill strong independence sentiment on the island.

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## Active involvement required

THERE IS no day that passes without a Middle Eastern leader reminding the U.S. that the attainment of peace in the region depends on its active involvement and resolve. Even when the Europeans, the Middle East immediate neighbours, push for a greater role, Arab leaders remind them that the U.S. is still the main broker of peace between Arabs and Israelis.

The reason why Arabs do that is their belief that the U.S. is the only country that has leverage on the Jewish state and the only one that can force Israel's hand. But the U.S. insists that it can only be a broker and not a party to the negotiations. That is a dubious position. Since negotiations between Arabs and Israelis depend on the balance of power between the two parties, and since Israel is the more powerful party, and because the U.S. adheres faithfully to the doctrine that Israel must remain more powerful than all its neighbours, then the U.S. cannot claim to be an honest broker. Israel remains to be the U.S. strategic ally in the region and the recipient of the largest single amount of U.S. civil and military aid. Its lobby in Washington, AIPAC, is one of the most influential organisations in the U.S. and one of the major financiers of presidential and congressional campaigns in North America.

The U.S. policies towards the region have gone through little, if any, change during the past decade. The fact that the Arabs and especially the Palestinians have come to a long way towards accommodating Israel on the one hand and the U.S. interests in the region on the other have done very little to convince the American administration, but especially Congress, to adopt an evenhanded policy towards the Arabs. Not only that, Egypt and Jordan, which both signed peace with Israel and which both exert tremendous efforts towards achieving peace on the other tracks, are both frustrated at the pace of progress in negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel.

What both countries want to see the U.S. doing is increase its involvement in the process and convince its allies in Tel Aviv to end their tactics that threaten the whole process. It is not only Jordan and Egypt among the Arabs who are genuinely involved in the quest for peace. Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, to name only a few, are all interested in peace and aware of its virtues. What they all want is more involvement and resolve from the U.S.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Aswaq decried the almost indifferent attitude of a number of Arab regimes vis-à-vis the U.S. House of Representatives' announcement that Jerusalem will remain the united capital of Israel to which all embassies should be moved. Rashid Hassan said that it is astonishing to find Arab leaders still expressing optimism over the peace process which has achieved nothing and which has been murdered by Benjamin Netanyahu and the U.S. backing for Israel's illegal measures. The writer said that if the Arab governments say that they were not surprised by the U.S. move and can do nothing to halt Israel's expansionist, settlement measures, it would not be surprising to see the Arab regimes pursuing the negotiations with the Israelis for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. But what is astonishing, though, is to hear certain Arab governments justifying Israel's practices and finding excuses for maintaining contacts with the Netanyahu government, said the writer. Why should the Arab governments turn a blind eye to Israel's actions and why should they keep on begging their enemy while they, together, can form a united force to regain their lawful rights, said the writer. With backing from the United States, which also imposes its hegemony on the Arab countries, the writer said, Israel exercises a free hand in the region and continues to disregard the feelings of the Palestinians and their rights, as well as those of the whole Arab Nation.

GOVERNMENT PLANS to reform the public administration came under scrutiny by Mohammad Daoud, a writer for Al Dustour Sunday. It seems that senior officials and heads of many departments oppose the government's reform measures, considering them as encroaching on their own authority and a move to curtail their influence, said the writer. In order to introduce real reforms, the government ought to first create special, well-trained, efficient units to carry out the aspired reforms within a limited timetable and to ascertain that the appointed units are efficient and competent and not chosen from among the existing inefficient employees, suggested the writer. He said that the government should also follow up on these units' work in order to ensure that their task is yielding fruit. The writer said the government also has to create units entrusted with supervising the training of existing government employees in order to guarantee that the reform plans will work and achieve their objectives. He said that the government should not be discouraged by the attitude of certain heads of departments who oppose reform and who, said the writer, seek to retain the present inefficient system.

## Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

## Market forces should decide the fate of the tourism sector

THE JORDANIAN tourism industry generated more than \$700 million last year to maintain its position as Jordan's second largest sector after mining. This occurred in spite of a new regulation that was passed on April 1, 1996, that severely limited the competitiveness of the tourism industry. The regulation required that travel agents who only sell travel tickets provide an annual bank guarantee of JD 25,000 to the Ministry of Tourism along with their application for licence renewal. Agents who organise tours are required to provide a bank guarantee of JD 50,000, even though they already provide guarantees to their counterparts overseas. Of the 400 travel agents that were operating in the Kingdom, only 267 are licensed, with the rest closed down because of their inability to meet these requirements.

On June 17, 1996, in a previous article, I warned that such would be the outcome and described the law as anti-competitive because it would send the small operators out of business and clear the market for the larger ones. Big firms may be more efficient than small ones, but that should never be decided by legislation but by market forces. The way the market operates is that the large firms with cost advantages (economies of scale and/or scope) compete with the smaller firms and the one with the lower cost for the same product lowers the price to the consumers and attracts them away from the more expensive small producer.

In order for this process of elimination to occur, the market must be given a chance to operate. It must be trusted and legislators must have the patience to let the market rule on the outcome of the competitive process. In Jordan the legislator decided the outcome anyway. So the question is: Why do legislators believe that they are smarter or more competent than the market?

Jordan is not a planned economy and legislation of this kind does not help anyone. Since the big firms are

in control of the political debate, they did not put up much of a fight to save the small tour agents and the number of the unemployed increased a little as a result.

Now the story has a funny side as well. It is not the legislator only who does not believe in the market system; neither does the operator. The Jordan Society for Tourist and Travel Agents (JSTTA) suggested last week that the entry and exit fees from the southern crossing points from Israel to Jordan be increased to \$100 for one day exit and entry visas; \$70 for arrival and exit two-day visas; and \$60 for three-day, two-night visas. This is a strategic move to counter the one-day Petra trip tourism from Israel.

Such a move requires neither imagination nor hard work on anybody's part. It is just another piece of legislation that is passed and the problem is solved. In the short-run, and on the condition that tourists from Israel have a strong, inelastic demand for Petra, some of the tourists will stop coming to Jordan while the government revenues will increase, which is exactly why this legislation may find favour with the government and be passed. However, the increase in government revenue does not mean that the revenues of those who depend on tourism may also increase. On the contrary, while government revenues may rise, tour agents will most likely see a fall in their income.

What is required is a value-added type of solution. Projects such as Bani Hamida, Jordan River Design, and the Dana Natural Reserve, which create something out of almost nothing and generate great added value (98 per cent in the case of Dana) are what Jordan needs.

Otherwise, in the long-run, the public-private sector partnership that has been advocated in recent years will have achieved the wrong results through the wrong means. Legislative action will have been used to create a trade barrier or impose a protective measure at a time when the whole economy is being liberalised. Or is it?

## America has an interest in the peace process

By Brent Scowcroft

WASHINGTON — It is hardly news to say that the peace process is faltering. It may still be news to say that without a drastic change in the role being played by Washington, it is very likely to collapse.

What happened to the hope of the 1991 Madrid summit? What happened to the promise of the 1993 Oslo accords? Where is the lift from Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation of 1993 and the normalisation of Israeli-Jordanian relations of 1995? Were all these fragile flowers from the spring of change destined to shrivel in the scorching heat of Israeli-Palestinian mistrust?

The Madrid summit, which launched the present Mideast peace process, was a direct outgrowth of the Gulf war. American policies and actions during that conflict earned the United States the confidence and trust of both Arabs and Israelis. It also left the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which badly misjudged that confrontation and its consequences, in serious need of rehabilitation. The election of Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister completed the ingredients for progress.

Mr. Rabin was one of the giants of our time. From his tough beginning as military commander in the legendary six-day war, he had matured in a manner which combined that toughness with wisdom.

By 1992 he seemed to have adopted two principles for dealing with the generation-long confrontation with the Arab World. The first was that the notion of Israel living per-

manently in a sea of bitterly hostile Arab states was intolerable. That had to be changed.

The second principle, stemming perhaps from his experience with the intifada campaigns, was that the traditional notion of a greater Israel which somehow integrated West Bank Palestinians would not work. The two peoples were not yet ready to live interspersed with each other.

These twin conclusions led him to accept the notion of an eventually autonomous Palestinian entity. And, in a dramatic departure from tradition, he also concluded that to reach his objectives for Israel he had to do business directly with the PLO.

All this was surprisingly well received in Israel and met with almost universal approbation elsewhere. For the first time since the creation of the state of Israel, virtually all the Arab states indicated their support both for a process to reconcile Israelis and Palestinians (Oslo) and for their own ultimate acceptance of Israel.

Mr. Rabin's philosophy does not appear to be shared by Benjamin Netanyahu. He appears determined to stop the Oslo process well short of its goals — and Palestinian nationalism well short of a viable, if demilitarised, state — but in a manner in which Yasser Arafat rather than he himself can plausibly be seen to be the cause.

Mr. Netanyahu's strategy, if it exists, seems to be to take actions, such as opening the tunnel alongside Muslim holy places in Jerusalem or beginning construction of the Har Homa housing project in East Jerusalem, which he surely

must know will be provocative. "Provocation" is a strong term, but the manner in which Mr. Netanyahu has acted makes it apt. Mr. Arafat has almost no leverage to apply in response to such actions. What he can do is turn the people out into the streets.

This in turn, allows Mr. Netanyahu to remind the world that the agreed basis for negotiations is land for peace and security, and to point out that people throwing rocks in the streets are clear evidence that there is no security.

The fact that Hamas and perhaps other terrorist groups back and act with the demonstrators makes the situation more complicated, since terrorism can never be condoned. It also makes the Netanyahu case much more dramatic and compelling. At the same time, while Mr. Arafat's relationship with Hamas is not clear, Hamas appears at least as serious a threat to him as to Israel.

Not that Mr. Arafat is blameless. He has indeed left commitments unfulfilled — prominently including change of the PLO charter. This, as well as many of his actions which, at a minimum, indicate tolerance for violence and terror, do not inspire confidence. But his stake in the Oslo accords is high. For him, Oslo is the only game in town, and its demise would be a serious, if not fatal, blow to his aspirations.

Likewise for the United States. U.S. credibility in the region built up by the whole process, beginning with the Gulf war, is on the line. The Arab states want the Arab-Israeli problem to go away, and so support the Oslo process. Should Oslo collapse, they

would support the Palestinians, casting Israel back into isolation.

Confidence in the United States would plummet, and willingness to share risks and burdens with it not only in the Middle East but also in the Gulf would dissolve. Chaos, violence and terror could sweep the area, posing grave costs to the United States and jeopardising its many and important interests in the region as a whole.

Mr. Netanyahu does not appear to have anything like the same cost-benefit analysis. While accepting with visible reluctance Mr. Rabin's conclusions about dealing with the PLO, he made a narrowly circumscribed deal on Hebron and then apparently because he saw no other way out, rather than because he accepted the Oslo principles.

At this critical juncture, the United States needs to assert the absolute priority of its own interests in the Middle East peace process. It never should provoke confrontation with Israel, but, as in the case of settlement loan guarantees during the Bush administration, this sometimes is unavoidable and need not prevent significant accomplishments or continued close relations.

America cannot dictate what Israeli interests are, but it is time to make clear to Israel that America's own interests are directly and heavily engaged, and that it fully intends to protect them.

The writer was national security adviser to President George Bush. The article above is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

## Human Rights File

## The right to life supersedes all other rights

By Waleed M. Sadi

MINISTER OF Information Samir Mutawi appeared on Rami Khouri's weekly television programme "Encounter" a fortnight ago to defend, yet again, the recent, controversial amendments to the Press and Publications Law of 1993. Dr. Mutawi cited a report by a weekly tabloid, saying that Jordanian agricultural produce is dangerously contaminated, as an example of how the weekly tabloids could be detrimental to the national interest.

I can understand the minister's argument that the dissemination of such information could undermine the national efforts to export such produce and could jeopardise our national economy. What I do not understand, however, is his objection to the publication of such a report about the state of our produce when, in fact, it is contaminated because of overuse of pesticides and insecticides.

If, in fact, our farmers abuse of the chemicals, the press has the duty to sound the alarm even if there is a risk of disrupting the export of these products.

The purpose of reporting any abuse of pesticides and insecticides is to rectify the wrongdoings of our farmers and prevent the wrongful use of substances that are universally viewed as carcinogenic.

The crux of the matter, therefore, should have been whether there was reasonable reason to believe that there is overuse of pesticides, insecticides and hormones that accelerate growth of agricultural produce.

Accordingly, before condemning the publication of reports on food contamination, one should endeavour to check whether these reports were published with malice, with knowledge that they are false or with utter disregard for the truth.

There is no sense to defend the promotion and the export of our produce if in fact there is a prima facie case in support of the allegation that the government's regulatory measures on the use of chemicals are not being faithfully observed by farmers.

The ministries of agriculture and health have issued guidelines on the spreading of pesticides and insecticides to pro-

tect vegetables and fruits, but it appears that there is no supervision in place to make sure the rules are enforced.

A University of Jordan graduate who had researched this problem recently came up with damning reports about the abuse of these chemicals. The purpose of showing the results of the findings of any research is not, and should not be, their endorsement but rather sounding the alarm.

Food contamination is too serious an issue to be brushed aside. And if it turns out to be true, it can be said that not enough is being done at the national level to combat the dangerous level of pesticides and insecticides that is being administered by farmers whose indifference may border on criminal negligence.

Of course, the export of Jordanian fruits and vegetables stands to suffer when suspicion is raised about food safety. The export of our produce may suffer temporarily from any negative publicity, but our, which is more important than the export value of these products, stands to suffer even more should we opt to remain silent.

The health of people has a price tag and an economic value over and above the human factor; therefore, it should not be underestimated by all those who profess worry about the ability of the country to go on exporting its products.

There is an overriding public interest to expose dangers to life since the right to life supersedes all other rights. And it would be infinitely more prudent to investigate all allegations of threats to human life than to wait till the damage is done and harm becomes irreparable. Since environmental concerns are often difficult to prove, many states have opted to err in favour of life.

I am sure there are many examples of where and when tabloids have gone too far, but I doubt that the example mentioned by Dr. Mutawi is the kind that would lead support to the government's case. Issues touching on life and health pose the most difficult standards on free press. Reporting on the water Jordanian drink or the foodstuff they eat is always controversial and troublesome. But life and health should stand above all other considerations.

## Statehood makes political reform possible

By Uri Avnery

The writer is an Israeli peace campaigner. The article below, reprinted from the International Herald Tribune, has been adapted from the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

TEL AVIV — Greek mythology invented the centaur, half man and half horse. What is happening with the Palestinians is reminiscent of this myth.

National liberation movements have fought for independence and have achieved it in our time. These movements have always gone through two distinct stages: an underground struggle up to the moment of liberation, and subsequently an independent state.

The Palestinians find themselves in an unusual situation. Their struggle for independence is still far from achieving its goal —

namely, a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Yet in a few designated territories the Palestinians have already established self-rule.

Thus, a modern-day centaur has come to life, part freedom-fighting movement and part nascent state. The trouble is, the two body parts do not fit together very well. A freedom-fighting movement and an independent state are fundamentally different entities, with different needs and objectives.

Take the matter of "transparency." In a democracy, management of public funds is subject to exacting public scrutiny. In a freedom movement, in contrast, secret funds are used to finance covert operations, like support of an underground movement, acquisition of weapons, political operations abroad, and payoffs to international supporters.

It is fair to assume that there is some truth to the rumours of financial corruption in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

In this type of interim status, some corruption would be practically unavoidable. But the Israeli media's infatuation with the subject of Palestinian corruption is somewhat puzzling, considering how thoroughly the media ignored recent revelations of corruption involving favourites of David Levy and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Another issue is freedom of the press. Until May 1948, all forms of Jewish press in the land served as propaganda tools mobilised by the national leadership. Even with the establishment of the state of Israel, this status quo continued for years.

Not surprisingly, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) lead-

ership is interested in keeping the press as a tool for its national struggle. But in the liberated territories many people want an independent press. It is fair to assume that, as happened in Israel, the real battle for achievement of a free press will be joined only after a Palestinian state is established.

Another issue: human rights. In an independent state, human rights are an absolute requirement, with no room for compromise. But no liberation anywhere has ever adhered to preserving human rights during the struggle phase.

Even in Israel, there was a time when David Ben Gurion turned in Irgun fighters to British intelligence, which did not have a pristine human rights record. And all of our underground organisations executed suspected collaborators.

As before, the struggle

for human rights will reach its peak with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

And most importantly: democracy. There is not and has never been a truly democratic liberation movement.

A liberation movement demands strong leadership, capable of making unpopular decisions. In the course of 35 years, Yasser Arafat has led the Palestinian liberation movement with a strong hand, and his colleagues willingly left the difficult, unpopular and dangerous decisions to him — from the armed struggle to acceptance of the Oslo accords. As we saw in the days of Ben Gurion, this style of rule leads to serious problems in an independent state.

There are some very encouraging first steps toward Palestinian democracy. The manner of debate within the Palestinian

Legislative Council demonstrates that, and it is no wonder that it annoys Mr. Arafat.

A most difficult situation has arisen. The freedom struggle is continuing and demands a strong leadership, yet in the territories there is growing demand for democratic leadership.

So long as the nationhood objective has not been achieved, even Mr. Arafat's most severe critics admit that there is no substitute for his leadership. When the Palestinian state comes into being, the real debate will begin. There are two models: a state like Jordan or Egypt, where democracy is limited, or a true democracy like Israel. The final outcome will undoubtedly follow a lengthy internal debate. I hope, and dare to predict, that the state of Palestine will turn out to be a true democracy.



## Bank under attack over plan to aid oil companies

By Rebecca Dodd  
and Matthew Grainger

LONDON — The World Bank is under fire for allegedly using aid funds to help giant oil companies develop a \$3.5-billion African oil project.

"What emerges here is a case of corporate welfare," says Korinna Horta, of the New York-based Environmental Defence Fund (EDF).

The bank maintains that access to an estimated 800 million barrels of oil in Chad's Doha Basin would transform the region's development prospects — boosting living standards and economic growth in one of the world's poorest countries. The plan envisages construction of a 1,100-kilometre pipeline from Doha to the southern Cameroon port of Kribi.

Encouraging oil companies to invest in an area considered risky for investments, it argues, is a way of helping governments who cannot afford to exploit the oil themselves.

Under proposed financial arrangements, the bank would provide \$370 million in concessionary loans. Of this sum, \$120 million would go to the governments of Chad and Cameroon to enable them to buy a minority shareholding in the consortium of Exxon, Shell and Elf that will develop the oil field. The rest would be available to the companies.

The bank may make another \$1 billion available for private investment in further facilities connected with the development of the reserves.

Bank involvement is an example of its new thinking in an era in which free markets and investment, rather than aid, are seen

as the keys to development.

These assumptions raise questions about the bank's very existence. Its response under its new president, James Wolfensohn, is to move towards more privatised development aid.

The shift has provoked criticism on two fronts.

Some argue that private firms should shoulder their own financial risks rather than rely on aid money to guarantee their investments. Shell, for instance, is ranked by a United Nations agency as the world's largest transnational corporation, with assets in excess of \$100 billion.

Others say that such deals divert aid from health, education and other social projects. "Ironically," says Ms. Horta, "World Bank studies demonstrate that these are exactly the projects that yield the best results in helping people out of poverty."

There is also concern that this particular deal would saddle Chad and Cameroon with debt and foster increased corruption in countries with poor human-right records.

Ms. Horta points out that the Doha region is the hub of religious and ethnic opposition to Chad's northern-based government. The sight of southern oil riches filling northern coffers would inflame tensions, and "is likely to increase southern demands for autonomy."

She likened the situation to that in neighbouring Nigeria, where Ogoni people protesting against environmental damage, lack of consultation and insufficient compensation from oilfield development have been repressed by the govern-

ment. Ms. Horta says the underground pipeline would pass through fertile farmland and rain forest, including the home of a pygmy minority.

The pipe could carry 225,000 barrels per day, and leaks could cause great damage, "creating a destructive environmental legacy." Other problems would include deforestation, loss of food production and a likely increase in wildlife poaching and public health hazards, such as AIDS, as job-seekers flocked to the construction route.

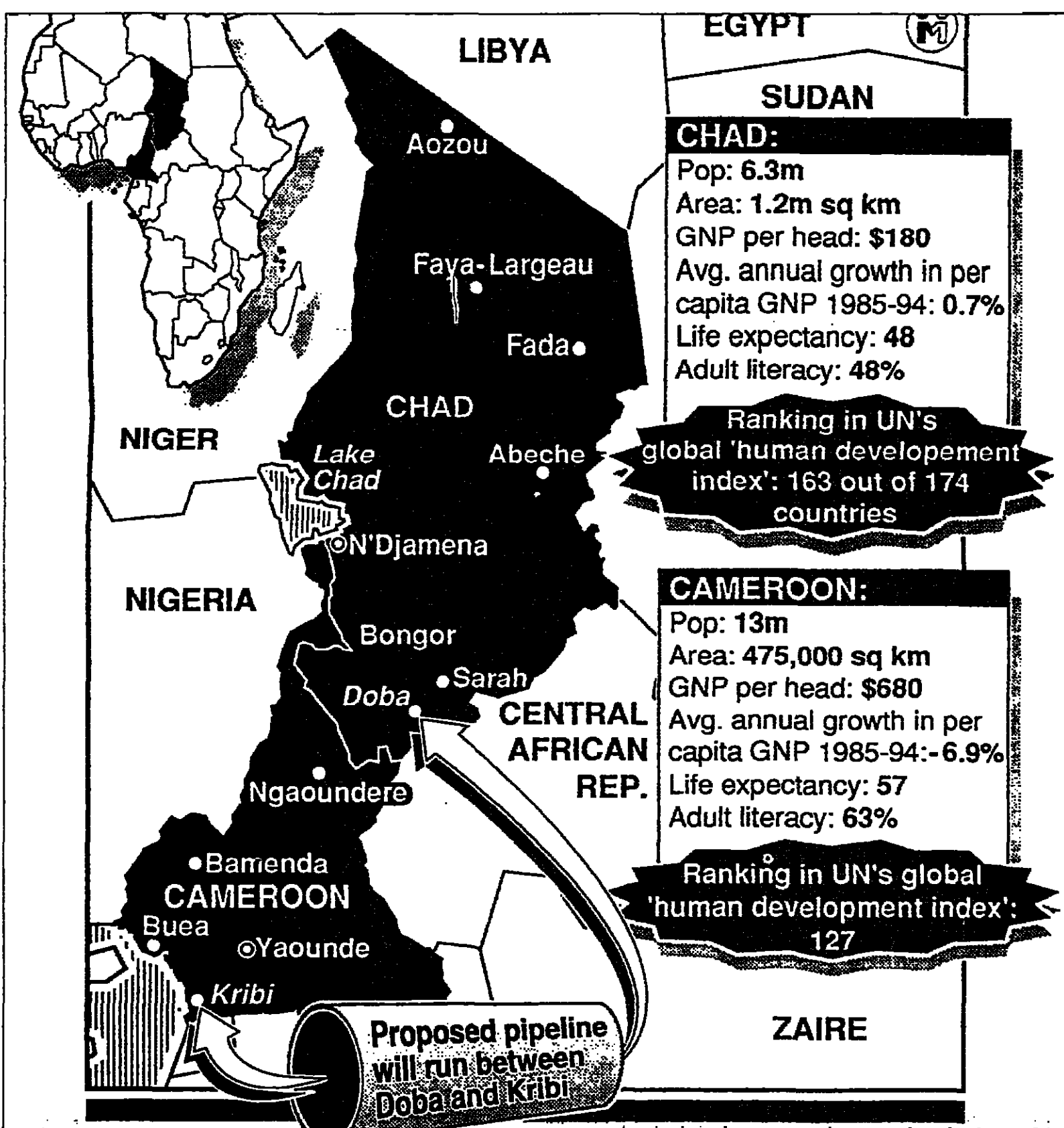
Resettlement of people forced from their land had not been addressed by the governments, she added.

A bank spokesman, Philip Benoit, insists the oil project — a decision on which will be made in December — would not be a substitute for social-sector initiatives. Revenue from oil sales would be strictly monitored to ensure that a proportion was directed towards development projects in southern Chad.

Mr. Benoit says the bank is taking environmental concerns "very seriously." He admits that the project would involve a minor resettlement of people, but is adamant that no work will begin until an environmental impact assessment has been completed and its findings considered.

"The project will proceed only if we feel comfortable with the environmental assessment," he says. "The EDF criticisms are ahead of the game because the assessment has not been completed yet."

Gemini News Service



## War over African elephant rages on

By Cris Chinaka  
Reuters

HARARE — A heated debate over the future of the wild African elephant has been raging for months in chic boardrooms around the globe and on the Internet.

The question is whether the elephant will be threatened with extinction if the world lifts a ban on trading its ivory.

The dominant view will be known after the 10-day conference of the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) that opened in Harare on June 9 and which will consider a proposal by three southern African states for allowing limited trade in ivory.

Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia say they should be exempted from the 1989 ban because their elephant populations were then — and still are — rising steadily, and are now over double the land's carrying capacity.

They have accumulated nearly 100 tonnes of ivory from annual culls and from legally hunted trophies since the ban was imposed.

With the support of Japan, the three countries hope to convince the 134-member convention that the ban will eventually drive trade underground, and propose that ivory collected from periodic culls to keep numbers down be auctioned under tight controls.

Zimbabwe Environment and Tourism Minister Chen Chimutengwende says the three countries have lobbied hard over the last two years to sell their argument, and is hopeful the CITES conference will open up "some limited, well-managed and strictly controlled trade".

Although there is some domestic opposition in some states all members of the Southern African Development Community



Traditional dancers sing and dance in support of sustainable wildlife at the opening ceremony of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Reuters photo)

(SADC) — Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Tanzania, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe — are expected to support the proposal.

But opponents say the southern Africa position has little backing elsewhere in the continent, especially in East and Central Africa where many countries lost large herds of elephants to poachers in the 1970s at the height of the legal trade in ivory.

"One would have expected Africa to spell out its position on the eve of the (CITES) conference... But there is no common position," said one East African diplomat during an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in Zimbabwe last week.

"No one pushed for that decision because it could have been embarrassing," he said.

Some Green activists fighting to ensure the survival of wild elephants argue that allowing trade to resume in ivory would be the world's biggest conservation blunder this century.

"The proposals risk a massive increase in elephant poaching across Africa and Asia and threaten the successful recovery of elephant populations," says the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency.

Perez Olindo, director of the U.S.-based African Elephant Foundation International, says the world should not serve the interest of just three states and endanger elephants in other countries.

The U.S. government

says although it appreciates the successful efforts of Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to manage their herds, easing trade restrictions posed unacceptable risks.

The three countries need support from two-thirds of the CITES members to get their elephant populations off the endangered list, which they have failed to get at the last three CITES meetings.

But Amsterdam-based environment protection group Greenpeace believes the battle for the African elephants will be fierce this time round because the pro-trade groups have the support of some unnamed powerful governments and the Conservation African Network (CAN), which tries to keep its membership secret.

CITES Secretary-General Izgrev Topkov is

annoyed that elephants have overshadowed the conference, and the debate over endangered species.

"The elephant may be the big one, but not the only one," he says, pointing at sturgeon fish, the rare Cuban sea turtle, whales and the need to protect and ensure the survival of the Peruvian butterfly.

Greenpeace accuses Norway and Japan of pushing, under pressure from leading pro-whalers and hunting associations, for a lift on the current ban in hunting whales.

It accuses its opponents of planning to change CITES from a conservation convention into a wildlife trading organisation.

CITES estimates that illegal trade in wild fauna and flora is worth up to \$10 billion a year.

## Iranian official...

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan's relations with Iran suffered a setback when an Iranian diplomat was expelled from the Kingdom in 1995, reciprocated by Iran.

Last month, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati excluded Jordan from a regional tour that took him to several Arab countries to invite leaders to the November summit of the Islamic Organisation Conference.

But reports said Mr. Velayati is expected here in a few weeks to invite Jordan for the summit.

Mr. Maliki said that if Iran signs a peace treaty with Israel, Arab countries and the Palestinians in particular will be the big losers of such treaty.

"If we suppose that we sign a peace treaty with Israel, we will have many privileges such as U.S. charges that we support terrorism will be dropped against us, we will have financial support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which refuse till now to extend any help to Iran."

U.S. hostile attitude will come to an end... but the big losers of such decision will be the Arabs, especially the Palestinians," Mr. Maliki said.

The official said the two pillars of Iran's foreign policy are "ideology and Iran's national interests" adding that "Islam and Iranianism are the two concepts that protect the country and it is not shameful to benefit from our ideology."

Mr. Maliki said that Persian Gulf is the most important issue in Iran's foreign policy as well as "our relations with the Gulf states. If we fail in this issue we will not be successful in our domestic policy. The first Gulf country that deserves our interest is Iraq."

"Iraq is our neighbour. We have long borders with it. We have a lot of differences, but our policy regarding Iraq are of two

folds: to preserve the sovereignty and independence of Iraq and our rejection to undertake any action that contradicts the U.N. Security Council's sanctions against Iraq," said Mr. Maliki who was responding to a question on the reasons that prevent Iran from returning Iraqi planes and jet fighters that have been sent to Iran during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

The Iranian diplomat reiterated his country's opposition to the Turkish incursion in northern Iraq but stressed that his government will not extend any help to President Saddam Hussein.

"We will not strengthen Saddam Hussein's regime so that he will not have ambitions against any neighbouring country in the future. If Saddam Hussein becomes stronger again, nobody would know to which direction he will head this time," Mr. Maliki said.

The official reiterated his country's claims to the United Arab Emirates' three islands in the Arabian Gulf and said that his country will not give concessions on this issue.

He refuted charges that Iran threatens Arab countries' internal security and said that Tehran's assistance to Hizbollah was aimed at helping Lebanon to rebuild its infrastructure following Israeli aggression.

"Hizbollah is a legal party in Lebanon which draws respect from all strata of the Lebanese people... we are happy to reconstruct southern Lebanon and the villages in these areas. This is our attitude to help Lebanon, not as you imagine," he said.

The official said that his government's support to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) was part of the responsibility that his country bears towards the Palestinian people and said that if Hamas and the Islamic Jihad did not exist, "Israel will not recognise Arab rights."

"The Palestinian people

who are fighting and struggling inside Palestine... should feel that Arabs and Muslims are standing beside them," Mr. Maliki told the gathering.

He said that his country has "new foreign policy plans" that will be enacted in the coming weeks adding that "the most important part of these plans is that related to the Arab World."

He did not elaborate. The Iranian official said that his country wants to solve the problems with the European nations following European Union's decision to pull back their ambassadors from the Iranian capital as a result of a verdict by a German court that implicated one of Iran's "top leaders" in an assassination attempt against Iranian Kurdish figures in Berlin in the early 90's.

"A problem occurred between the two sides. I hope that by August all problems will be overcome," said Mr. Maliki.

Mr. Maliki said the election of Mohammad Khatami as Iran's new president does not mean that the "Islamic revolution has come to an end. This is a continuation of the revolution... Mr. Khatami was one of those who built the revolution. The process of development will continue in Iran with a greater force. You should not be frightened of any change in Iran. These changes are occurring in a positive direction and it should be welcomed."

The official said that the election of Mr. Khatami by more than 21 million citizens, out of 31 million eligible voters, was because the new generations felt they need professional unions and associations which should be part of civil society.

Mr. Maliki stressed that "the revolution" was part and parcel of the new wave.

Mr. Maliki refuted accusations that women in Iran were subjugated and harassed by the Islamist regime in Iran.

## Palestinians look at Jordan's experience in public works

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Palestinian officials Sunday discussed scopes of cooperation in planning for and carrying out public works projects.

At a meeting cochaired by Ministry of Public Works and Housing Secretary General Bashir Jaghbir and his Palestinian counterpart, Deifallah Al Akhras, the two sides stressed the need to utilise the latest engineering know-how and findings of scientific studies and research in developing their plans.

They highlighted the importance of exchanging expertise in such fields as roads maintenance and ensuring traffic safety. The two sides also recognised the need for drawing up special training programmes for engineers and technicians in both countries to upgrade their performance.

The meeting comes within the context of the cooperation stipulated in the agreement which the two countries concluded last March in Gaza.

The Palestinian delegation is currently on a five-day visit to Jordan, during which they will look at Jordan's experience in the field of road construction and building.

## Beware of property glut, weak banking, BIS warns Asia

BASEL, Switzerland (AFP) — Asian economies should be wary of the effects of a property glut, weakness in banking systems and dangers posed by consumer credit, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) has warned.

The BIS in its annual report said many Asian countries faced a glut of property which was weighing on prices and straining some banking systems.

Substantial adjustment of property markets in Asia might continue to pull down stock prices, the report said, adding that estimates for the building industry signalled that supply might again boom this year or next in Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Manila.

This climate had given "credit-rating agencies a much greater role than even at the beginning of the decade", the bank said.

The implications in 1996 had pushed banks as well as countries to be more open about their activities.

A recent slowing of the economic cycle in several countries in Asia had highlighted structural weaknesses in the banking system, the bank noted.

"Bank fragility reflects adjustment to a liberal and open environment, and comes from a failure to rationalise the financial system in the wake of domestic deregulation," the report said.

It noted that in February the biggest finance group in Thailand had collapsed and that half of the group's loans had been committed to the property sector and consumer credit.

High rates of new lending had been noted in newly industrialised countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Emergent economies in Asia and Latin America attracted record amounts of private capital last year, the BIS reported.

In 1996 alone net inflows of private capital into Asia and Latin America exceeded the total for the whole of the decade of the 1980s, the bank reported.

The range of countries and institutions receiving funds from a broader base of private investors had changed the map of world capital flows, the bank, known as the Central Bankers' Central Bank, said in its 67th annual report.

The trend was driven by strong growth of the issue of international bonds.

"Despite the increased supply, risk premia for emerging market bonds narrowed during 1996 and early 1997 as persistence with stabilisation and reform policies improved the credit standing of some countries," the report said.

## Breaking Egypt's pound-dollar link seen mixed blessings

CAIRO (R) — An International Monetary Fund (IMF) official has said he saw some merit in breaking the link between the Egyptian pound and the U.S. dollar but the immediate effect would be for the pound to rise in value.

Egypt's central bank has kept the pound within a range of 3.30 to 3.40 pounds to the dollar for the past six years, despite relatively high Egyptian inflation.

Whether the government can or should maintain this policy indefinitely has been one of the biggest dilemmas facing policy makers in Egypt's economic liberalisation programme.

Economists say the real value of the pound, accounting for the inflation difference, has risen by more than 30 per cent over the six years, thwarting attempts to promote Egyptian exports.

Gouda Abdul Khalek, economics professor at Cairo University, told a seminar in Cairo that the current policy was attracting excessive capital inflows, which benefit from high pound interest rates with minimal risk of devaluation.

This has pushed up the government's domestic debt because the central bank has to sterilise the inflows by issuing large amounts of treasury bills and bonds in Egyptian pounds.

Arvind Subramanian, who represents the IMF in Egypt, told the seminar: "Getting out of this anchor policy...certainly has some merits. But if you get out of the anchor policy at this stage, the pressure will be on the exchange rate to appreciate."

"Is Egypt willing to live with the competitive consequences of an appreciating nominal exchange rate or does it want to address it in some other manner?" he added.

He said he saw two possible courses of action but both had serious disadvantages for the Egyptian economy.

"You can clamp down and say no more capital... That has its set of costs in terms of what the Egyptian government signals about the future course of economic policy," he said.

"On the other hand, you can say speculative capital is bad and we want to redirect it towards more real capital... But the factors that drive foreign direct investment are factors that encourage investment in general. By clamping down on speculative inflows, you don't necessarily get more real investment," the IMF official explained.

Mr. Abdul Khalek said the government had to abandon the anchor to the dollar as part of a package which would also include easing fiscal policy to generate more growth.

"This anchor has been very helpful but one has to be careful that there is an end to this. We are dragging our feet. It's about time we moved, judiciously and cautiously," he said.

He described the level of public domestic debt as "a bubble about to burst." "It is alarming," he added.

But Mr. Subramanian dismissed any alarmism about public domestic debt, saying that as a proportion of gross domestic product it had fallen to 55 from 65 per cent and was still falling.

"The debt situation is pretty comfortable... The situation is probably well under control," he added.

"Parallels with Mexico are in my view overdone and in many ways false...In the Egyptian case, the level of reserves in relation to cumulative capital inflows that come in are just far too high. Egypt's reserves are robust enough to weather any potential outflow of capital," he said.

Egypt has foreign reserves of about \$19 billion, enough for about 15 months of imports. The government is proud of the reserves but some economists say they cost too much to maintain because the treasury pays higher interest on domestic debt than it receives from its foreign exchange holdings.

REUTERS

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### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	ITL	SGD	HKD	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7380	0.6118	144.50	115.05	1.3629	1.0000	1.0000	1.6667
DE Mark	0.5754	1.0000	0.3517	23.63	19.36	2.3364	0.5754	0.5754	0.8933
GB Sterling	1.6348	2.8395	1.0000	166.09	136.75	2.2037	1.6348	1.6348	2.4838
CH Franc	0.6928	1.2019	0.4238	79.50	1.0000	1.4833	0.6928	0.6928	1.0000
JP Yen	0.0067	0.0119	0.0038	1.0000	0.8756	1.0813	0.0067	0.0067	0.0087
CA Dollar	0.7231	1.2563	0.4421	1.0445	0.8756	1.0813	0.7231	0.7231	1.0000
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0011	0.0004	0.0009	0.0008	1.0000	0.0006	0.0006	0.0008
NL Guilder	0.5115	0.8835	0.3127	73.90	58.81	0.7070	0.5115	0.5115	0.7736
FR Franc	0.1704	0.2961	0.1042	24.6209	19.36	0.2356	0.1704	0.1704	0.2663

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	SGD	JPY	CHF	DEM	ITL	HKD	FRF	GBP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	144.50	115.05	1.3629	1.0000	1.0000	1.6667	0.6928
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	0.7080	144.50	115.05	1.3629	1.0000	1.4124	2.2037	0.6928
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1888	0.1006	0.0807	0.0807	0.0807	0.2666	0.2666	0.2666
Bahrain Dinar	2.88	1.8782	9.9488	8.08	8.0828	9.74	2.88	4.0740	8.9787
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	0.8831	1.01	0.2747	0.3300	0.3300
Kuwait Dinar	3.3057	2.3404	12.3873	12.3873	12.3873	12.3873	3.3057	4.0740	8.9787
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0211	0.8810	1.00	0.2723	0.3300	0.3300
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4669	2.4416	0.2454	2.3687	0.1969	0.65	0.8125	1.7238
Egyptian	0.2954	0.2092	1.1079	0.1114	1.0753	0.0894	0.2954	0.3637	0.3637

Energy									
Oil	WTI	Brent	UK	US	Asia	Europe	Japan	India	Africa
Brent	16.95	17.20	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95
WTI	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95
Bonny	16.95	17.20	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95
Dubai	17.18	17.20	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95	16.95
UL Gas	167.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	SGD	JPY	CHF	DEM	ITL	HKD	FRF	GBP
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	0.1006	0.0807	0.0807	0.0807	0.2666	0.2666	0.2666
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0211	0.8810	1.00	0.2723	0.3300	0.3300
KW Dinar	3.3057	2.3404	12.3873	12.3873	12.3873	12.3873	3.3057	4.0740	8.9787
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.2723	1.0211	1.0211	0.8810	1.00	0.3770	0.3300	0.3300
CY Pound	1.8226	1.2936	6.3536	6.3536	5.3636	6.3536	1.8226	2.2037	2.2037

Metal Prices									
Metal	Price	Price	Price	Price	Price	Price	Price	Price	Price
Gold (oz's)	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1	341.1
Silver (oz's)	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
Platinum (oz's)	431	431	431	431	431	431	431	431	431
AL (3 Months)	1581	1581	1581	1581	1581	1581	1581	1581	1581
CU (3 Months)	2570	2570	2570	2570	2570	2570	2570	2570	2570
Zinc (3 Months)	1388	1373	1388	1373	1388	1373	1388	1373	1388
Lead (3 Months)	627	630	627	630	627	630	627	630	627
Ni (3 Months)	7300	7300	7300	7300	7300	7300	7300	7300	7300

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
New York	7782.04	70.57	0.92	7789.88	7712.37	7711.41	7782.04	70.57	0.92
DOW JONES	7782.04	70.57	0.92	7789.88	7712.37	7711.41	7782.04	70.57	0.92
S&P 500	893.27	9.79	1.11	894.69	883.48	883.48	893.27	9.79	1.11
FT-SE 100	4783.1	25.7	0.84	4796	4771.9	4757.4	4783.1	25.7	0.84
Nikkei 225	20528.35	38.11	-0.18	20815.5	20451.8	20364.5	20528.35	38.11	-0.18
CAC 40	2808.52	48.25	1.75	2811.86	2781.84	2760.27	2808.52	48.25	1.75
DAX	3744.44	38.45	0.98	3751.28	3740.91	3707.99	3744.44	38.45	0.98

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

## THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

1 Kansas Bob  
5 Dom De—  
10 Pack  
14 Strong as —  
15 Texas town  
16 Threw with force  
17 Indian peasant  
18 Mosquito  
19 Baltic feeder  
20 Use (up)  
22 Burned  
24 Historic vehicles  
26 Geraint's beloved  
27 Part of NBC  
31 Wolflike animal  
35 Constellation  
36 Biographies  
38 Comment from the sea  
39 Row  
40 "— and Ale"  
41 Watch pockets  
42 401  
43 Heavy cloth  
44 Cecil or Agnes De—  
45 Puppeteer Jim  
47 Like raisins  
49 Boater and skimmer  
51 Lampreys  
52 Diaries  
56 Additional ones  
60 Story beginner  
61 Is able to  
63 Confusing network  
64 Auctioneer's word  
65 Sun hat  
66 God of love  
67 Ages  
68 Haste  
69 Hub

DOWN

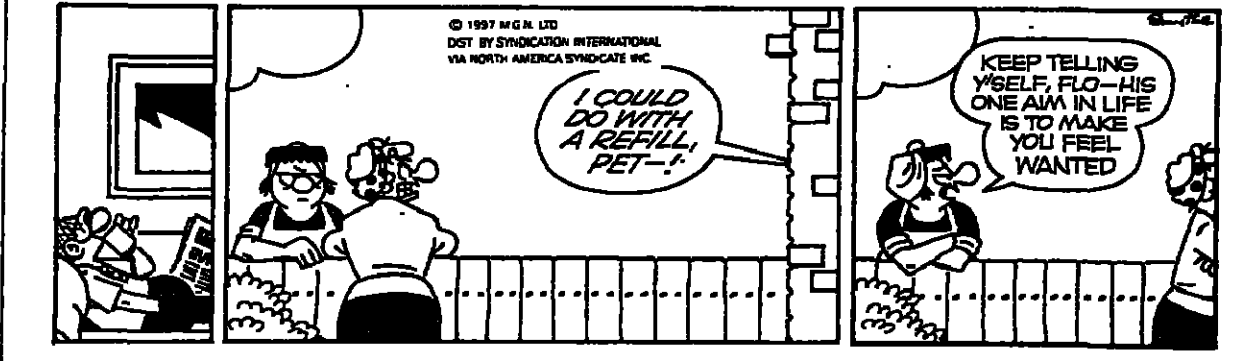
1 Dely  
2 Cameo material  
3 Chicago area  
4 Outside  
5 Induce, in a way  
6 One, to Pierre  
7 China  
8 Kitchen utensil  
9 Perfumes  
10 Roundup  
11 Fuss  
12 Baker's need  
13 As it —  
21 Light gas  
23 Rivers: Sp.  
25 Side dish  
27 Indentation  
28 Take for — (dupe)  
29 Kind of sale  
30 Prefers  
32 Old Greek coins  
33 Postpone  
34 Alleviated  
37 Place of a crime  
40 Connections  
41 Adam  
43 Kind of shark  
44 1560  
46 Destroys  
48 In demand  
50 Sailboat  
52 San —, CA  
53 — about (circa)  
54 Western school letters  
55 Minor actor  
57 Incarnation of Vishnu  
58 Sea of —  
59 Withered  
62 Southern general

by Melvin Kenworthy

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n'Jeff



### HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JUNE 16, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson  
Astrologer, Carroll  
Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) This is a good time today to focus your energy on the social side of life, so go out with friends later this evening and have a wonderfully happy time together. You will meet with close friends for recreational activities.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You can make a fine impression on your superiors today just by operating along at your normal pace. Be very careful in motion of any kind especially that of being on the highway, thereby avoiding any difficulties.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Planning out the small details today of that trip you are so excited about will make the waiting much easier. Get plenty of rest later this evening, thereby you can deal with any stressful situation which comes in your direction.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) If you talk over today a new project with a seasoned fellow business person, you will have a greater understanding of what is involved for you to be quite successful in your career activities which must be accomplished.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You should not be timid or shy, today calls for an aggressive attitude, however, don't be rude or pushy. Make sure any contracts are airtight, so that you can for see any difficulties which could be present at this time.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) If you put a little enthusiasm into your daily tasks today, that energy will inspire your fellow associates. Stay at home and enjoy your loved ones later this evening and they will respect your enthusiasm.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) This is a good morning today to make plans for recreational activities in the days ahead with your close friends. Then get busy completing a new project you have been putting off, thereby gain recognition of a bigwig.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) This would be a good evening today to entertain friends in your abode, so labour on making your home more comfortable and receptive to these individuals. You can make your guest feel welcome by being gracious.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Adding a bit of humour to any communications you have today would improve your chances of getting the desired results. Later this evening will be good for going out on the town with your mate to a romantic location.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) If you need some advice of a financial nature today, seek out only those persons who have been quite successful. Be sure to drive with great care while on the highway, so that you avoid any difficulties which in motion.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Just be yourself and you'll make a big hit with others socially later this evening. You should not let anyone talk you into getting involved in a risky scheme which could have disastrous consequences in the days ahead.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Some unusual ideas can be ruined to your advantage today. This is a good time to focus your attention on the romantic side of life and do something which will show to your mate that you are caring.

Birthstone of June: Pearl — Moon Stone



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Minister expects tourism investments to reach JD500m by year 2000

**\*\* INVESTMENTS** in tourism projects were estimated by Tourism Minister Aqel Biltaji to total JD500 million up to the year 2000. He noted that most projects being under implementation now will be completed by that year.

The minister said: "According to our expectations, the tourism activity will rise during the coming years and the number of tourists will increase noticeably." He indicated that there will be between 3,000 and 4,000 hotel rooms during the coming three years.

Mr. Biltaji anticipated an "investment rush" on a wide scale in the near future, especially when Aqaba becomes a free zone. Such a status, he pointed out, will constitute a tourism attraction area that would be independent, with standards of international free zones.

He explained that the southern sea shore will include no less than 15 to 20 large tourist sites, such as hotels, playgrounds and tourist villages, in addition to some on the northern sea shore which will include an artificial lake.

Mr. Biltaji referred to the regional project which groups all the areas that overlook the Red Sea and highlighted the relative advantage to market Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan and Egypt together as one tourism package (Al Dustour + Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

### Foreign workers given until June 19 to obtain work permits

**\*\* FOREIGN WORKERS** have until June 19, 1997 to regularise their work permits and residence status. Acting Labour Minister Mohammad Khair Mamser has announced. The deadline expired June 14, 1997 but a one-week extension was seen necessary due to the high number of workers who were crowding the many labour offices around the country.

According to a senior Ministry of Labour official, the number of workers who regularised their working status in the Kingdom reached 68,518 from March 17, 1997 until June 12, 1997. Most of the work permits were in the sectors of construction, agriculture and services.

The official, Employment Director Bahjat Quteishat, said 38 per cent of the total number were working in Amman and surrounding suburbs. He expected revenues from fees to reach about JD5.5 million after the one week extension.

Mr. Quteishat emphasised that inspectors will conduct wide-ranging campaigns to ensure that foreign workers have valid work permits. He said that Egyptian labourers seeking employment in Jordan should obtain a prior labour contract approved by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in addition to the Egyptian embassy in accordance with the bilateral agreement signed by the two countries (Al Ra'i).

### Foreign equity rises to 45% at Jordan Kuwait Bank

**\*\* FOREIGN EQUITY** in the capital of the Jordan Kuwait Bank went up Saturday from 30.3 per cent at the beginning of this year to about 45 per cent when the Bahraini United Gulf Bank bought 1.4 million shares of the Jordan Kuwait Bank. The value of the deal amounted to approximately JD4.4 million (\$6 million) as the price per share averaged about JD3.100 (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

## Investors air disappointment over lack of work speed at Aqaba's South Coast

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

**AMMAN** — Despite the initial enthusiasm, the implementation of the development plan for Aqaba's south beach is proceeding very slowly and not without difficulties, businessmen and officials say.

The South Coast master plan, launched at the 1995 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Amman economic summit, envisaged the construction of four five-star hotels, with a minimum capacity of 250 rooms each, and two 18-hole world class championship golf courses, to

be accompanied by 415 luxurious suites.

Two years after the plan was launched, however, investors have not even finalised yet the land-lease agreements with the ARA (Aqaba Region Authority).

"We have not yet finalised the land-lease agreement, and we have been reviewing the contract with the ARA for the past year," said a spokesperson from Lewis Trust Int'l, a British-Israeli company which owns a half a dozen hotels in Eilat and provides 2,600 hotel

rooms in Spain.

According to the agreement Lewis is negotiating with the ARA, the spokesperson said, the London-based company should build 300 five-star standard rooms within three years from the signing of the contract.

A JD6 million project for a 250-room hotel, in the south beach, will be carried out by the local NET Tours.

A 300-room tourist village is also supposed to be built by a joint-venture between the local Zara Investments and Club Med, but the foreign partner is backing out, Zara Chairman Khalil Talhouni

says.

"The land on the south beach has been offered to investors on a lease basis," Mr. Talhouni told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview Sunday, while the Cabinet has recently approved to sell plots to investors for projects on the north beach.

"The government is very serious about the North Lagoon development project," [which includes the construction of an artificial lagoon and 10 to 11 hotels in an area from 250 to 500 dunums], and Mr. Talhouni said, "we are trying to convince ARA to include in the contract something

to the extent that if the government decides to sell any land in one area, the same applies to other areas."

According to Mr. Talhouni, foreign investors are having "second thoughts" about supporting the Aqaba South Coast Development Master Plan.

If Club Med backs off, "we will try to bring in somebody else," Mr. Talhouni commented.

Meanwhile, ARA President Fayer Khasawneh, minimising the controversy, denied rumours that foreign investors are considering withdrawing their offers.

"We are in the process of installing infrastruc-

ture, such as electricity, water, telephone lines, roads and sewage system, and a contractor is on site and working [in the south beach]," Dr. Khasawneh told the Jordan Times, adding that "they [the investors] have all deposited bank guarantees, and none of them has expressed reservations."

However, "the two golf-courses project is still pending," he said, stressing that the delay in the negotiations is not due to the ARA, but to the developer, a joint venture between a local company, ARAM Development, and the Arizona-based POINT Int'l.

### Qatar prepares to host Mideast economic summit in November

**DOHA (AFP)** — Qatar began preparations Sunday to host a Middle East economic summit on November 16-18 saying it expects around 2,500 participants despite Arab opposition to sitting at the table with Israel.

A Qatari official said six committees were set up to prepare the conference, the fourth such annual event since 1994.

Almost 1,500 hotel rooms have been reserved for some 2,500 participants, including 800 officials, 800 businessmen, 300 representatives of regional and international organisations, and 100 experts, said the official.

Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, confirmed Friday in Washington that his country will also invite Israel, in spite of the hardline stand of its right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Syria has drummed up opposition to the conference because of the deadlock in the Middle East peace process, winning the backing of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, according to Arab diplomats.

Arab League foreign ministers called in March for a freeze in any normalisation with Israel after it began work on a Jewish settlement in disputed east Jerusalem.

Israel was invited to the three previous Middle East and North Africa economic

summits: In Casablanca in 1994, in Amman in 1995 and in Cairo last year. Syria and Lebanon boycotted all the forums.

Meanwhile, the president of Israel's Federation of Chambers of Commerce said Sunday he was assured by the Emir of Qatar that Israel would be welcome at November's Middle East and North Africa economic summit in the Arab Gulf state.

"Israel's participation in the Qatar conference is not in question," Danny Gillerman said in a statement. "We will participate at the most senior level and about 100 Israeli business executives will take part."

Mr. Gillerman said he met Qatar's Emir in New York last week along with senior U.S. and Arab officials at preparatory discussions on the economic summit.

"The Emir promised the Israeli representatives...and those of the U.S. administration that Israel would indeed be invited to the Qatar conference," Mr. Gillerman said.

Qatar's foreign minister recently said Israel's attendance at the summit was contingent on progress in the peace process.

Doha, which has trade links with Israel, is hosting the conference, the fourth since landmark peace negotiations began in 1991. Israel attended the previous three summits.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 15/06/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANS.	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
269.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	8	340	86550	254.50	254.00	-.50	
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	5	0.00	31	16269	32883	2.00	2.05	+.05	
3.400	2.750	BANK OF JORDAN	6.5	0.00	1	252	785	3.19	3.14	-.05	
1.210	.880	MID. EAST INV. BK.	61.7	0.00	8	2100	1962	.94	.94	0.00	
2.480	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.4	7.45	4	565	1282	2.27	2.27	0.00	
5.200	4.250	THE JORDANIAN BK.	14.2	0.92	7	4008	19837	4.97	4.97	0.00	
2.280	2.440	JOR. KOWAT BANK	11.2	0.00	69	24472	75364	3.04	3.16	+.12	
1.050	.780	JOR. GULF BANK	5.2	8.05	19	15750	13567	.86	.87	+.01	
4.050	2.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	16.9	3.28	9	2164	7916	3.66	3.64	-.02	
1.920	1.120	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	99.1	0.00	5	2650	3801	1.14	1.13	-.01	
2.830	1.000	UNIT. AL-MUL. (BETHNA)	.7	13.51	13	2850	3256	1.14	1.11	-.03	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS						175	71238	244465			
1.620	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.1	5.99	12	4130	6866	1.67	1.67	0.00	
.840	.480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	23.7	0.00	3	1700	848	.49	.50	+.01	
9.300	6.900	ALRAI	12.5	7.14	1	100	700	7.00	7.00	0.00	
7.870	3.900	AD-EXPORT	16.6	5.16	2	350	1385	3.90	4.10	+.20	
1.220	.960	ZARCA EDUCATION	9	0.00	3	450	445	1.00	.99	-.01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS						25	6880	10342			
4.450	3.060	JOR. CREDIT FACT.	27.3	2.72	25	78583	318189	4.07	4.05	-.02	
4.140	2.710	JOR. PROPERTIES MGRS	11.1	2.50	6	22000	88000	4.00	4.00	0.00	
7.080	4.950	ARAB POSTAL CO.	15.4	3.02	6	14100	91334	6.60	6.62	+.02	
3.260	2.680	INDUSTRIAL CONGR. INC.	9	0.00	5	1400	2580	1.99	2.00	+.01	
4.090	3.040	ARAB FRASH. MGR.	10.6	5.19	7	2498	9584	3.86	3.85	-.01	
2.970	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	7.8	10.54	3	234	537	2.30	2.32	+.02	
5.860	4.250	DAR ALMAJAL. DEV. INC.	14.4	4.59	9	1746	9803	5.45	5.45	0.00	
.950	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.4	0.00	9	5700	2793	.50	.49	-.01	
1.330	.610	INTERMED. PETRO. CORP.	9	0.00	3	750	473	.64	.63	-.01	
2.520	2.130	MULTI-CABLE WIRE. MFG.	42.5	0.00	1	242	373	2.69	2.65	-.04	
1.000	.550	JOR. STEEL-CHEN	9	0.00	1	750	140	.56	.56	0.00	
2.530	1.390	UNIV. POWER INDUS.	9	1.18	2	250	348	1.39	1.39	0.00	
1.320	1.120	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	15.1	8.93	9	569	637	1.12	1.12	0.00	
1.600	1.300	MULTI. CHEMICALS	14.3	4.61	1	250	380	1.45	1.52	+.07	
1.160	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.9	0.00	3	839	728	.87	.87	0.00	
2.050	.610	EX. -RAY BEAM MGR.	52.2	0.00	9	1746	829	1.52	1.52	0.00	
1.310	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	13	3746	4316	1.16	1.13	-.03	
1.340	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	40.5	0.00	4	2000	1780	.90	.89	-.01	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS						105	135589	534756			
GRAND TOTAL						305	211707	791563			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 15/06/1997											
.800	.410	MACE. ZOP. RENT. HAIN.	9	0.00	2	500	263	.50	.53	+.03	
.640	.350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	6	3400	1328	.39	.40	+.01	
.710	.410	JOR. TRAD. INC.	13.3	0.00	4	3000	1475	.49	.50	+.01	
1.550	1.120	JARA FOR INVESTMENT	49.2	0.00	1	9920	13880	1.25	1.20	-.05	
.640	.660	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	6	25337	3876	.68	.68	0.00	
.750	.370	ARAB FIV. INVEST.	9	0.00	21	100317	51025	.50	.51	+.01	
.990	.730	AL-SHARQ TRV. 75%	9	0.00	2	5850	3042	.77	.77	0.00	
.990	.610	AL-DAMLIYAN 75%	62.4	0.00	12	8216	3168	.64	.65	+.01	
.880	.700	JOR. INDUS. MACH. JERICO	9	0.00	1	300	69	.24	.23	-.01	
.730	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	200	108	.54	.54	0.00	
.620	.430	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	45.4	0.00	1	4750	1998	.44	.42	-.02	
.720	.450	MULTI. TEXTILES	9	0.00	1	100	47	.46	.47	+.01	
.760	.400	MULTI. HOLY. ENG. NABATON	9	0.00	43	152350	93575	.61	.61	0.00	
.880	.710	JORDAN STEEL	31.5	6.76	9	1815	2825	.75	.74	-.01	
.880	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	2	1470	734	.50	.50	0.00	
.730	.600	MIDWEST PHARM. 75%	9	0.00	8	2500	975	.64	.64	0.00	
.800	.600	INDS. TRD.	25.3	0.00	6	1600	643	.41	.41	0.00	
.900	.760	INDS. CERAMIC	21.6	0.00	1	50	41	.82	.82	0.00	
.760	.550	PEARL SAV. P. CONV.	9	0.00	2	79	45	.57	.57	0.00	
1.000	.820	MKT. AL-KHAYMA 75%	9	0.00	14	10712	6148	.64	.62	-.02	
.870	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	8.1	15.15	3	6000	3960	.66	.66	0.00	
GRAND TOTAL						147	336570	187224			

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(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: LURID ANISE BLITHE GIGGLE  
Answer: Striking oil left them - GUSHING





## Graf ponders retirement

BONN (R) — German tennis star Steffi Graf is considering retiring from tennis, according to a German Sunday newspaper.

In an interview in Welt Am Sonntag, Graf said there was no guarantee she would resume her career following her knee operation in Vienna this week which is expected to rule her out of the game for up to six months.

"I am completely open on this question," Graf, who celebrated her 28th birthday on Saturday, was quoted as saying. "I am hopeful of the abilities of the physicians, but I would have no problem ending my career."

Graf, long the world's number one ranked player who recently slipped to third due in part to a long injury break this year, also suggested she had not yet ruled out

taking legal action against her doctor, Dr. Hans Paessler of Heidelberg.

"I did not release him from his oath of confidentiality and he has nevertheless been discussing my health files in public. I consider that not proper."

Graf had been out of action for several months this year with a knee injury and returned to the game in May. Graf, now at a rehabilitation centre run by Willy Dungs in Gars Am Kamp in Austria, said she was not going to rush a comeback.

"This time I will definitely start extremely slowly, with only a few minutes of training each day," she said. "I will go about it exactly like I did after the last injury break only that I then will hopefully know exactly what is wrong with my knee."

## Ivanisevic wins tight service duel at Queen's

LONDON (R) — Lofty Croatian Goran Ivanisevic won the tightest of service duels with Briton Greg Rusedski at Queen's Club on Saturday, triumphing 20-18 in a remarkable final set tie-break to clinch a place in the final.

The third seed's tense 4-6 6-4 7-6 victory, in which he traded booming aces with Rusedski, set up another thumping duel against Australia's Mark Philippoussis who had earlier beaten Swedish eighth seed Jonas Bjorkman 2-6 7-6 6-2.

Ivanisevic's eventual win looked in doubt in the final game of the first set, when he netted a simple backhand to offer the 16th seed a set point which he converted with a fierce backhand winner.

Rusedski's apparently impenetrable serve then wavered in the ninth game of the second set when he put two volleys into the net and Ivanisevic pounced to win with a fine return.

In the final set there was nothing between them. "It was just a matter of one or two points in the whole match," Ivanisevic said afterwards.

"By the time we got to the tie-break it was all a matter of luck."



Australian Mark Philippoussis plays a forehand during his semi-final match against Swedens Jonas Bjorkman at the Stella Artois Tournament at Queens Club, 14 June. Philippoussis won the match 2-6 7-6 6-2 (Reuters photo)

The Croat, ranked three in the world, said the tie-break was one of the most exciting he had played, ranking alongside a comparable tussle at the U.S. Open in 1993 when he beat Canadian Daniel Nestor.

Rusedski, also Canadian born, said he had had his chances. "He went for it and it went in and mine didn't," Rusedski, ranked 44th in the world, said.

Ivanisevic said he expected the match against the 1.95 metre tall Philippoussis to be "another missile game" with very few rallies.

The Australian said he turned his match against Bjorkman by slowing down his own mighty serve.

The 20-year-old son of a former Melbourne taxi driver,

who holds the record for the fastest recorded serve in tennis at 229 kph, struggled against Bjorkman's whipping returns until well into the second set.

"Jonas has one of the best returns in the game. It's hard when it comes back as fast as you serve it," the Australian said.

"So I thought maybe I'd slow the serve down and he started missing," Philippoussis, seeded six here, added.

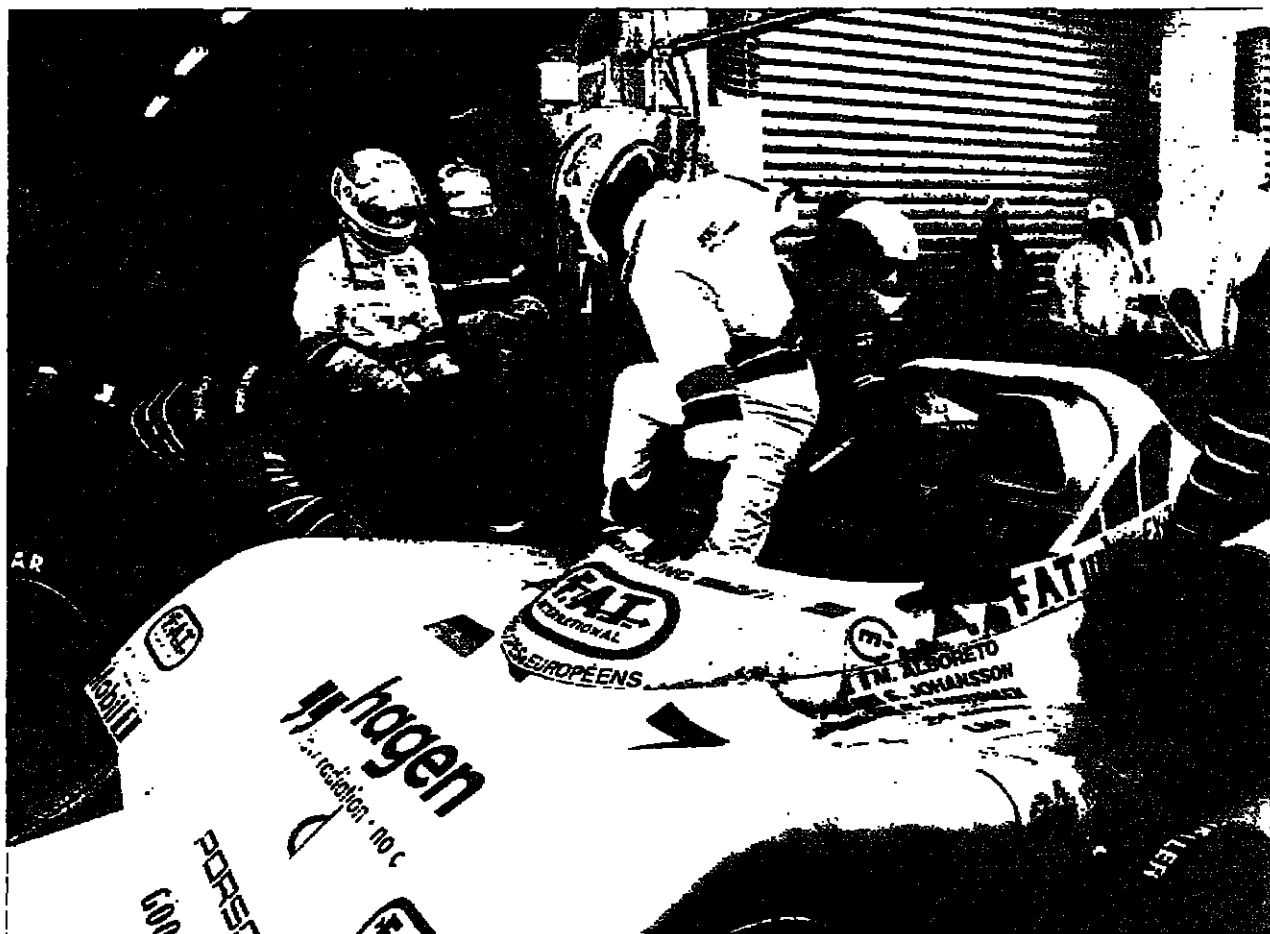
Under grey skies in West London, Philippoussis looked stiff and cold at the start of the match. He missed too many first serves and Bjorkman, who put out top seed and world number one Pete Sampras on Friday, took full advantage.

The 25-year-old eighth-seeded Swede broke the Australian's shaky serve in the fifth and seventh games of the first set and in the first game of the second in a purple patch of six games in a row.

Philippoussis eventually recovered to win the tie-break 7-5, taking the set with a huge serve that Bjorkman could only hit feebly into the net.

That set the tone for the rest of the match. Philippoussis went on to break the Swede's serve twice in the final set, serving 13 aces in total in the match and bringing his tally over four matches to 76.

Ivanisevic also served 13 aces on Saturday for a total of 57.



Stefan Johansson of Sweden trades places with Tom Kristensen of Denmark in the TWR Porsche during a technical stop in the pits, June 15. The factory Porsche driven by Dalmas, Collard and Kelleners is leading the 24 hours Le Mans endurance race ahead of the Porsche TWR driven by Kristensen, Alboreto and Johansson (Reuters photo)

## Alboreto wins Le Mans 24-hour race

LE MANS, France (AFP) — Former Ferrari Formula One driver Michele Alboreto gave the privately entered Tom Walkinshaw built Porsche prototype its second successive Le Mans victory here on Sunday.

Alboreto, whose previous best ever finish here had been eighth, took the lead just over two hours from the end when the front running works Porsche 911 GT1 of Ralk Kelleners burst into flames.

The Gulf McLaren driven by France's Jean-Marc Gounon was second, two laps behind, followed by the McLaren BMW of Peter Kox.

Alboreto's win was a bitter blow for the Porsche factory who had been banking on their 911 GTIs to take the world's most prestigious endurance race.

And for most of the race it looked as if the works cars would prove too much for the privately entered Joest team TWR Porsche.

Right from the start on Saturday afternoon the 911s of Bob Wollek and Kelleners dominated the race, pulling

away from the rest of the field, with Wollek leading the way.

As night fell barely ten seconds separated the two cars but with eight hours of the race left the Porsche dream began to crumble.

First to go was Wollek, in his 26th Le Mans and still looking for a win, when he went spinning off the track.

"My gearbox suddenly got stuck and I spun," explained Wollek.

Then with two and a half hours left disaster struck for Kelleners, who was holding a one lap lead over Alboreto.

Less than a minute after Kelleners pulled out of the pits following a regular refuelling stop the German was forced to pull over to the side of the track and scramble out as flames engulfed his car.

Kelleners could only watch on helplessly as his car was almost gutted before marshalls could get to it with fire extinguishers.

American veteran Mario Andretti, in his third straight race with the courage team, saw his chances of adding Le Mans to his list of victories, vanished

early Sunday morning.

Andretti, a former world motor racing champion, spun off and seriously damaged the car. Although he got back to the pits the delay dropped the team too far behind the Porsches and the car was finally withdrawn.

Nissan's hopes of taking their first title at their first attempt disappeared early into the race.

The car driven by former Grand Prix star Ricardo Patrese, brought out of retirement to try and give the Japanese car giant victory, was dashed by gear box problems while a second Nissan, led by Martin Brundle, suffered electrical problems.

What was even more annoying for Nissan was the fact that it was Tom Walkinshaw who has designed the winning Porsche chassis. The Japanese had signed up Walkinshaw and his TWR company late last year to help them land Le Mans.

The only consolation for Nissan that their third car, driven by Eric Comas, managed to finish the race.

## MAJOR LEAGUE RESULTS

Baltimore (AL)	6	Atlanta (NL)	4	Toronto (AL)	3	Philadelphia (NL)	2
NY Mets (NL)	5	Boston (AL)	2	Kansas City (AL)	8	Pittsburgh (NL)	3
1st-Cleveland (AL)	8	St. Louis (NL)	3	Montreal (NL)	1	Detroit (AL)	0
2nd-St. Louis (NL)	5	Cleveland (AL)	2	Minnesota (AL)	6	Houston (NL)	1
Chicago Cubs (NL)	9	Milwaukee (AL)	5	Texas (AL)	8	San Diego (NL)	6
Colorado (NL)	7	Oakland (AL)	1	San Francisco (NL)	10	Anaheim (AL)	3
Seattle (AL)	9	Los Angeles (NL)	8	NY Yankees (AL)	at	Florida (NL)	— (postponed)
Cincinnati (NL)	5	White Sox (AL)	1				

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1	28F/97	Supply Of: (500) Tonnes Of Caustic Soda/FLAKES	JD30	Wednesday 9/7/97
2	29F/97	Supply Of: (12,000) Metric Tonnes Of Wet Aluminium Hydroxide	JD125	Tuesday 15/7/97

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## Israel court rules against Netanyahu's indictment

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel's high court Sunday rejected a petition demanding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu be indicted for fraud in a decision his aides said closed the door on a six-month government corruption scandal.

Four judges on the five-member panel refused to overrule a decision by state prosecutors not to charge Mr. Netanyahu in the affair that threatened to topple his government.

But in a minority opinion which could generate further criticism of Mr. Netanyahu, one judge wanted to issue an injunction ordering the state attorney to show cause for his decision not to indict the prime minister.

"The majority opinion is based on the principle that the court does not intervene in decisions of the state attorney unless they are extremely unreasonable," High Court Justice Yitzhak Zamir told the court, in the ruling on a petition by opposition legislators.

The judges also rejected petitions demanding that Justice Minister Tsahi Hanegbi be indicted or sacked.

Israeli police recommended in April that both Mr.

Netanyahu and Mr. Hanegbi be charged with fraud and breach of trust in the short-lived appointment of lawyer Roni Bar-On as attorney-general last January.

Israel's Channel One Television had alleged Mr. Bar-On's appointment was part of a deal to win a plea bargain for key coalition legislator Aryeh Deri of the religious Shas Party in his three-year corruption trial.

But state prosecutors on April 20 said there was sufficient evidence to indict only Deri.

"The minority decision is that the evidence collected in this affair, and the importance of the matter, justify issuing a temporary injunction concerning the decision not to indict the prime minister," Justice Dalia Dorner wrote in her decision.

Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein said the police case against Mr. Netanyahu was based on testimony of one witness which he said was insufficient for bringing charges.

Deri has denied all accusations. Mr. Bar-On, who quit 12 hours after taking office amid a public outcry that he was unqualified for the job, was cleared by prosecutors.

"This affair has come to an end and justice has been

served," said Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman, Shai Bazak.

But opposition legislators seized on Ms. Dorner's minority opinion and predicted the affair would continue dogging Mr. Netanyahu.

"This means 20 per cent of the panel thought this prime minister should stand trial. I think today the countdown has begun for Benjamin Netanyahu's rule," said Yossi Beilin of the main opposition Labour Party, adding that the decision was a political "earthquake."

The lawyer for a citizens' watchdog group behind one of the petitions said an appeal was unlikely.

"This is virtually the end of the line. There's not much more we can do," said attorney Ido Shapira.

At a hearing last month, the five-judge panel threw out several related petitions including a request to order a state investigation into the allegations and one to make public the 995-page police report on the affair.

Mr. Netanyahu has apologised for any mistakes in the Bar-On appointment, but accused the media and opposition of trying to use the affair to overthrow the government.



KING AND QUEEN IN SWITZERLAND: Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor addressing the 85th session of the International Labour Conference at the Palais des Nations in Geneva Friday (AFP Photo)

## Qatar voices Gulf Arab fears of U.S.-Iran clash

DOHA (R) — Gulf Arab states are concerned about a possible showdown between Iran and the United States which would harm all countries in the oil-rich region, Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani said.

Sheikh Hamad, who was rebuffed last week when he urged Washington to relax its strategy of "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran, was speaking in English in an interview on Cable News Network (CNN) aired in the Gulf Sunday.

"We feel in the Gulf that a clash between the United States and Iran could happen at any moment and as far as we are allies to the United States we think we will feel the bitterness of such a clash if it happens," he said.

He reiterated his view that the United States should open talks with Iran following the election last month of moderate Mohammad Khatami to replace President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Sheikh Hamad also said

he doubted Iran was behind last year's bombing of a U.S. military complex in the Saudi Arabian town of Khobar which killed 19 U.S. servicemen.

"I do not think that Iran would do such an explosion like what happened in Khobar because the Iranians know that the United States wants to have any excuse against Iran and I think the Iranians are intelligent and understand this," he said.

Asked whether the United States should respond if it had proof of Iranian involvement, he said: "If they respond we are going to suffer in the Gulf. We are the nearest countries to Iran and we have American bases and troops who normally would be one of the targets which the Iranians try to hit."

"We hear the declarations of the new Iranian president... I think he made a good declaration concerning peace in the Middle East and I think the Americans should respond to such a good declaration," Sheikh Hamad said.

The Qatari leader was referring to comments by Mr. Khatami that Iran still opposed the Middle East peace process but would not interfere or try to disrupt it as the West accuses it of doing.

"My advice would be that talks between the United States and Iran would be good for the whole area. At least the United States could test the Iranian new mind," Sheikh Hamad said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton considers Iran a state sponsor of terrorism and Iraq a regional bully that refuses to abide by post-Gulf war U.N. resolutions at the expense of its own people.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen, who Saturday began a tour of Gulf Arab states, said Washington was "hopeful but sceptical" that Iran would give up its support of international terrorism following Mr. Khatami's election.

Sheikh Hamad said his country — a member of the

six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also grouping Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — supported U.N. resolutions on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But he said a solution should be found for the suffering of the Iraqi people from U.N. sanctions.

Sheikh Hamad, who has established trade relations with Israel, said the only way to overcome obstacles to the Middle East peace process was to press ahead with negotiations.

Asked whether Qatar would still host a Middle East-North Africa (MENA) economic summit despite pressure from some Arab countries that oppose it because of the stalled peace process, Sheikh Hamad said: "Yes sure... we are committed to having the meeting next November."

Qatar has said Israel's attendance at the summit is contingent on progress in the peace process.

## Fire guts Bahrain home in new 'terrorist' attack

MANAMA (R) — Unidentified arsonists set fire to a house in Bahrain, causing damage but no casualties, and a government official Sunday described a series of recent arson attacks as "continued acts of terrorism."

The blaze at the home of a Bahraini national was the latest in a series of arson attacks to hit the Gulf's main financial and banking centre in the past eight days.

An interior ministry official said in remarks quoted by newspapers the latest attack occurred Saturday in Hamad town, 15 kilometres southwest of the capital Manama.

"A group of people stormed a house in Hamad town, poured kerosene on gas cylinders inside the house and set them ablaze. One gas cylinder exploded,

causing damage to the ground floor," the official said.

A car exploded in Manama Saturday causing no casualties, a government official said. Witnesses said the powerful explosion destroyed the car and badly damaged another vehicle parked nearby.

The blast occurred hours before six Bahraini Shiite Muslims went on trial on charges of possessing unlawful leaflets.

They were convicted but the court said the men should be set free because they had already spent 14 months in jail. They were also fined 200 dinars (\$530).

There was no official explanation for the latest surge in civil unrest, but a government official described the attacks as "continued acts of terrorism."

Members of Bahrain's majority Shiite Muslim community have launched a campaign of sporadic attacks since December 1994 to demand political and economic reforms by the Sunni-led government.

Among the victims of the attacks have been members of the Asian community, who some Bahrainis believe are taking away jobs and offer an easy target.

On Friday, four Asians died from smoke inhalation and a fifth was in critical condition after fire gutted a shop in Manama. Officials said the fire was premeditated.

The deaths raised to more than 30 the number of people killed in the Gulf Arab state since the unrest began.

## Polls fail to prevent Algeria killings

ALGIERS (AFP) — An armed Islamic group raided a village near Algiers and burnt to death or slit the throats of 13 of its inhabitants, a privately-owned daily reported Sunday.

The massacre Saturday on Algeria's Mediterranean coast between Daouda and Kolea, near the resort of Zeralda, was the worst reported by the media since June 5 parliamentary elections. Some of the assailants attacked a house close to a police post in a diversionary move while the others targeted the village, the Arabic-language Al Alem Essiyasi reported.

Eight people died in fires, and five others had their throats cut, the paper said, adding that the toll could have been much greater had other families not managed to flee.

Saturday's incident, which was not confirmed by the authorities, is the second such attack in under a week. On Thursday, 12 villagers near Boufarik, 30 kilometres south of Algiers, were killed under similar circumstances, the daily Al Khabar reported Saturday. Legislative elections, held June 5, gave a sizeable victory to President Liamine Zerrouk's National Democratic Rally (RND),

## ADC launches campaign to end sanctions on Iraq

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. civil rights group launched a campaign Saturday to expose what they said was the devastating impact of U.N. sanctions on the people of Iraq and vowed to stage teach-ins in more than 100 cities.

The Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) claimed the sanctions, imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, had caused the deaths of more than 1.5 million Iraqis, including more than 600,000 children.

The group created a task force at its annual convention here and said it would work with other organisations to demand the immediate lifting of the West's embargo against Iraq.

As part of the campaign, hundreds of children were to march to the United Nations on July 1 to present to the Security Council petitions and messages from the planned teach-ins and vigils the week of June 26th.

Events were planned across the United States, Europe, Japan, South Africa, Lebanon and Australia.

"The sanctions policy... is creating an artificial famine, a silent slaughter

entire population," said Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Centre and one of the people who compiled a U.N. report last year on the suffering caused by the sanctions.

Ms. Flounders said more than 4,500 children under the age of five were dying every month in Iraq due to lack of medicines and food, as well as a result of drinking contaminated water.

"Sanctions are not a replacement for military action they are part of it," she said.

Destruction of Iraqi water treatment and sewage plants during the Gulf war, and the subsequent blocking of efforts to rebuild, amounted to "Biological warfare against civilian people," said Kathy Kelly, who helped found Voices in the Wilderness, a campaign to end the sanctions and bring medical supplies to Iraq.

Members of the group who have travelled to Iraq face 12-year prison sentences and fines of more than \$1 million for breaking the U.N. embargo.

Under the 1991 ceasefire ending the Gulf war, a special U.N. commission must certify that Iraq has no weapons of mass

United Nations will lift curbs on Iraqi oil exports, although Baghdad is allowed limited oil exports under a humanitarian deal.

The United Nations last month estimated that in Kurdish areas of the north 19.3 per cent of children under five were malnourished, of which 26 per cent were chronically malnourished and four per cent were acutely malnourished.

Dr. Adil Humadi, an Iraqi native and professor of surgery at State University of New York in Buffalo, N.Y., said he had travelled to Iraq and opened a small clinic there. He said he was shocked at the conditions in hospitals and said children were dying for lack of medicines like penicillin.

He also cited anecdotal evidence of increased cancer rates after the Gulf war, something U.S. civil rights groups and veterans groups have linked to use of weapons employing depleted uranium.

U.N. reports have estimated that more than 500 tonnes of highly toxic and radioactive depleted uranium were fired into the environment during the war, potentially causing immune system diseases, cancers, congenital defects,

## German MP visits Iran amid diplomatic dispute

TEHRAN (AFP) — A German parliamentarian is on a visit to Iran to discuss bilateral relations amid a diplomatic crisis between the two countries, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Juergen Moelleman, a former economy minister, arrived Saturday and has already held talks with officials at the ministries of oil and transport, the English-language Iran News said.

The German embassy here confirmed that the MP was in Tehran, but refused to give details about the purpose of his visit. Iran News said Mr. Moelleman was the highest-ranking European politician to come to Iran since the April 10 verdict by a German court accusing Tehran of involvement in the 1992 murder of four Iranian oppositionists in Berlin. The ruling provoked a crisis in diplomatic ties, with each country recalling its ambassador and expelling four diplomats from the other side. Other EU countries also withdrew their top diplomats here in solidarity with Bonn.

They later decided to send them back but suspended their return in protest at Iran's refusal to admit the

## SPLA rebels claim capture of major Sudanese town

NAIROBI (AFP) — The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has captured the southern Sudanese garrison town of Yirol in Bahr Al-Ghazal region, SPLA spokesman Samson Kwaje announced here Sunday.

Mr. Kwaje said that Yirol, one of only three major towns in the Bahr Al-Ghazal region to be in government hands, fell to SPLA fighters and its allied Civil Defence Forces (militias) at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The other two major towns still in government hands in the region are Wau and Awil.

The capture of Yirol brings to a successful end SPLA's operations in the Lake State, which started with the capture of Warop, Rumbek, Tonj and now Yirol itself, a strategic town in the Bahr Al-Ghazal region, Mr. Kwaje said.

The capture also brings under SPLA control the whole western Equatoria region bordering Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, and makes up more than half of the state.

Kwaje said the SPLA forces killed many of the garrison town's government defenders, who had included two battalions of 1,000 men and another 1,000

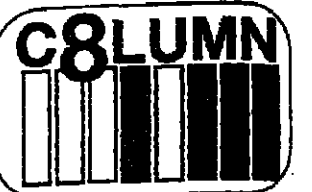
(militias or Mujahadeen). The remaining government troops have scattered in two directions toward Tali, between Yirol and Kerekeka, and to Ganyel, towards Bentiu in the western Upper Nile region.

During the bloody two-and-a-half-hour battle for Yirol, which started at 3:00 p.m., SPLA fighters captured two armoured vehicles and large quantities of arms and ammunition, which had been flown in from Khartoum in the past two weeks.

The reinforcements had been brought in with the aim of using Yirol as a bridge to recapture Rumbek and Tonj, which fell to SPLA forces on May 1 and May 9 respectively.

The SPLA, which has been battling Sudanese government forces since 1983 to free the Christian and Animist south from domination by the Arabised, Muslim north, launched its latest offensive in March and has been steadily capturing territory from government forces.

Its forces have also combined with other opposition groups in an effort to topple the Islamic military regime of President Omar Bashir, attacking government forces on three separate fronts in



## Wife gives eye, loses ungrateful husband

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi woman who donated an eye to restore her husband's sight has ended up losing him to another woman, a newspaper reported Sunday. Al Jazirah said the man could not stand the sight of his wife being one-eyed and decided to re-marry. The couple lived in the Riyadh region.

## Guests toast Chinese bride and groom with heroin

HONG KONG (R) — Guests toasted the health of the bride and groom at a wedding in China with heroin instead of champagne, a Hong Kong newspaper said Sunday. The newly-weds were addicts and treated guests at their wedding in the western city of Chongqing with the drug bought with a wedding gift of cash from their parents, the Chinese-language Ming Pao newspaper said. The paper said the celebration came to an abrupt halt when police burst in and arrested the couple. They were both sent to drug rehabilitation centres, the newspaper said.

## Hong Kong betting frenzy for horse race pool

HONG KONG (R) — A gambling frenzy is sweeping Hong Kong with punters chasing the biggest pay-out in the territory's horse racing history. The Hong Kong Jockey Club will pay more than HK\$400 million on Sunday to holders of a HK\$10 winning ticket for a triple win wager. The South China Morning Post said the pot could reach a world record HK\$700 million by the start of the races in the afternoon. The races at Sha Tin are also the last before Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule at midnight on June 30, ending more than 150 years of colonial rule.

## Gulf Air flight removes drunk in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — The pilot of a Gulf Air flight took advantage of a stop at Cairo airport to let off a drunk Arab man who was frightening other passengers, airport sources said. They said Egyptian authorities took the unnamed 52-year-old into custody after he was taken off the Casablanca-Doha flight. The authorities took the man to a doctor and then to a police station, the sources added.

## Florida robberies financed weekly court payments

FORT LAUDERDALE (R) — A Florida man was charged in a series of Monday bank robberies that police said enabled him to make court-ordered restitution payments due the next day. Tipsters led police to Donald Lewis Dingsong, who was charged with 11 counts of bank robbery, the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel reported. Police and the FBI had been looking for him since the series of bank robberies began April 14 in the Fort Lauderdale area. "This guy was hitting every week and then he didn't hit for about 10 days and we were wondering what the heck. We found out he was in jail from May 7 to May 11 for violation of probation," Sheriff's detective Jim Young told the Sun-Sentinel. "Two days after he was released he robbed a bank again." Most of the robberies occurred on Mondays. Dingsong confessed to the robberies, explaining that he was scheduled to meet his parole officer on Tuesdays to make restitution payments to his victims.